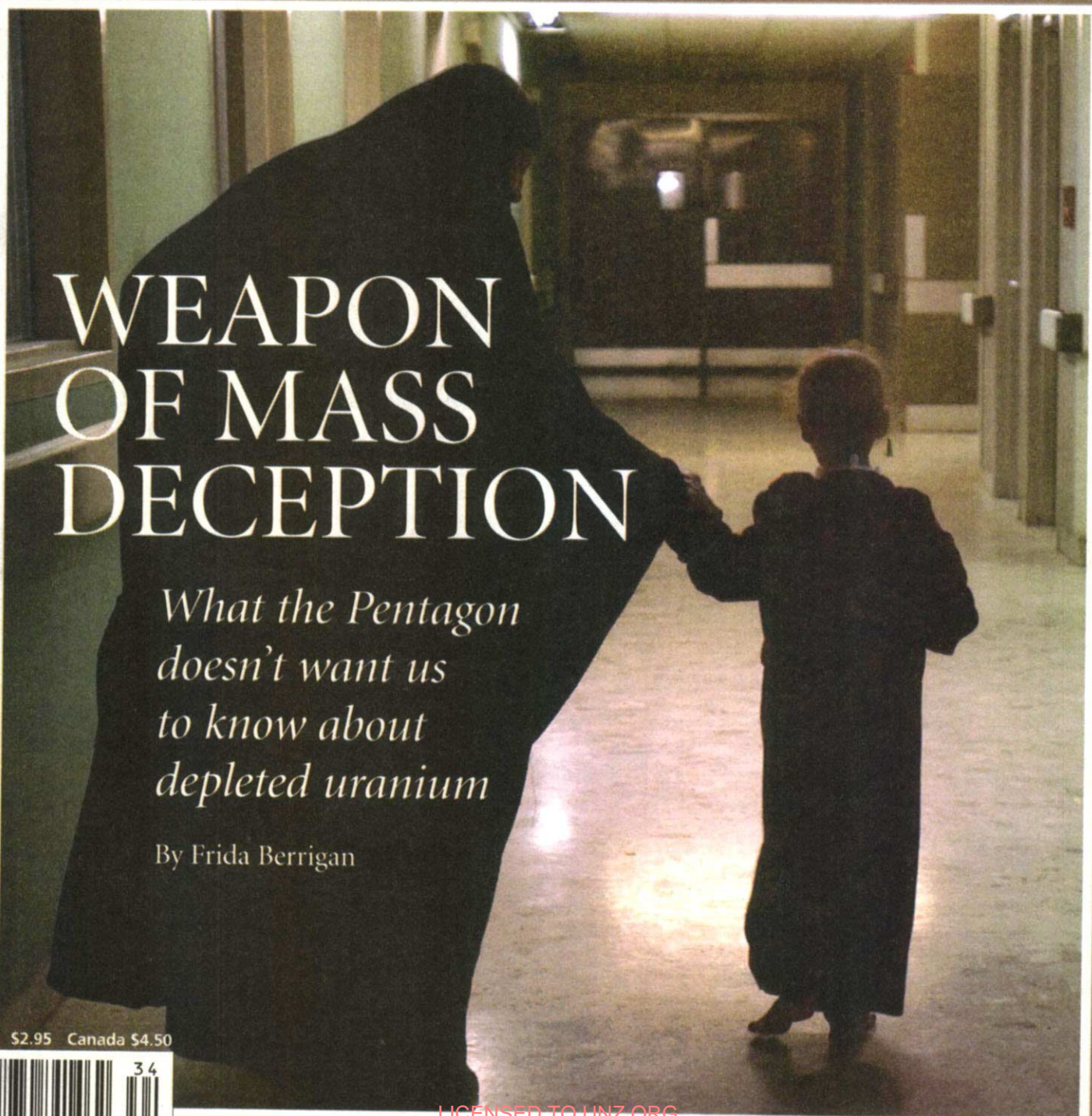


DATAMINING • OUR NEW ALLIES, THE TALIBAN • TONY KUSHNER

In These Times

INDEPENDENT NEWS & VIEWS

July 21, 2003



WEAPON OF MASS DECEPTION

*What the Pentagon
doesn't want us
to know about
depleted uranium*

By Frida Berrigan

\$2.95 Canada \$4.50



LICENSED TO UNZ.ORG
ELECTRONIC REPRODUCTION PROHIBITED

www.inthesetimes.com

James Weinstein
Founding Editor and Publisher

Editor: Joel Bleifuss

Senior Editors: Craig Aaron, Patricia Aufderheide, David Moberg, Salim Muwakkil

Culture Editor: Joe Knowles

Associate Editor: Kristie Reilly

Editor-at-Large: Sheryl Larson

Contributing Editors: Terry J. Allen, Bill Boisvert, Ana Marie Cox, Susan J. Douglas, Barbara Ehrenreich, Annette Fuentes, Juan Gonzalez, David Graeber, Miles Harvey, Paul Hokenos, George Hodak, Doug Ireland, Naomi Klein, Robert W. McChesney, Dave Mulcahey, John Nichols, James North, Geov Parrish, Kim Phillips-Fein, Jeffrey St. Clair, Jane Slaughter, Fred Weir, G. Pascal Zachary, Slavoj Žižek

Proofreaders: Alan Kimmel, Norman Wishner

Interns: Brian Cook, Elizabeth Ehrenberg, Ana Hristova, Daniel Morris, Jeremy Ohmes, Elizabeth Patek, Jessica White

Art Director: Jim Rinnert

Associate Art Director: Seamus Holman

Illustrator: Terry LaBan

Intern: Gediminas Bagdonas

Publisher: Jeff Epton

Associate Publishers: Jessica Clark, Aaron Sarver

Circulation Director: Peter Hoyt

Advertising Director: Emily Udell

Interns: Jason Griffin, Brian O'Grady, A.L. Loy

In These Times Publishing Consortium:

Grant Abert, Theresa Alt, Stuart Anderson, R. Brent Fisher, Collier Hands, Anne Larson, Lisa Lee, Chris Lloyd, Robin Lloyd, Edith Helen Monsees, Abby Rockefeller and Lee Halprin, Perry Rosenstein, Lewis Steel, Studs Terkel, James Weinstein

In These Times (ISSN 0160-5992) is published biweekly by the Institute for Public Affairs, 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647. Periodicals postage paid at Chicago, IL and at additional mailing offices. Postmaster: Send address changes to *In These Times*, 308 E. Hitt St., Mt. Morris, IL 61054. This issue (Vol. 27, No. 17) went to press on June 20 for newsstand sales July 7 to July 21, 2003.

The entire contents of *In These Times* are copyright ©2003 by the Institute for Public Affairs, and may not be reproduced in any manner, either in whole or in part, without permission of the publisher. Copies of *In These Times'* contract with the *National Writers Union* are available upon request. Contact the union at (212) 254-0279 or <http://www.nwu.org>.

Subscriptions are \$36.95 a year (\$59 for institutions; \$61.95 Canada; \$75.95 overseas). For **subscription questions, address changes and back issues** call (800) 827-0270.

Editorial correspondence and letters should be sent to: 2040 N. Milwaukee Ave., Chicago, IL 60647. Phone: (773) 772-0100. Fax: (773) 772-4180. E-mail: itt@inthesetimes.com.

Complete issues and volumes of *In These Times* are available from Bell and Howell, Ann Arbor, MI. *In These Times* is indexed in the Alternative Press Index and the Left Index. Newsstand circulation through the IPA International Sales Cooperative at (415) 643-0161, or info@bigtoppubs.com.

Laws of Empire

In 1996, Burmese peasant villagers filed a lawsuit against Unocal. They charged the U.S. oil company with knowingly collaborating with the country's repressive military government to forcibly relocate peasants living in the path of Unocal's oil pipeline project. The military used these peasants as slave labor to clear a path for the pipeline and build service roads. The suit claimed that those who refused to work were often killed, beaten, tortured, or raped. Documents filed in the case indicate that Unocal had been well-informed by its advisors of how the military operated, and knew of its history of using slave labor.

The villagers, who had fled to Thailand, had no legal recourse under the Burmese military dictatorship, but they did have an opportunity to seek justice in the United States, where they filed suit under the Alien Tort Claims Act (ATCA) with the help of the International Labor Rights Fund (ILRF).

Now the Bush administration, acting on behalf of major multinational corporations, is planning to block that rare option for legal redress of international human rights violations. On May 8, the Justice Department filed a brief in the Unocal case, arguing that ATCA is being misused and poses a threat to the nation's foreign policy and fight against terrorism. This is just the latest example of the Bush administration attempting to undermine international law in order to grant U.S. corporations and U.S. government personnel legal immunity for their actions overseas—except when it serves those corporate interests.

Originally enacted in 1789, ATCA allows federal courts to hear complaints by foreigners about violations of the "law of nation" or treaties signed by the United States. It lay dormant until 1980, when the family of a man tortured to death in Paraguay brought a lawsuit against the responsible policeman, who then was living in the United States. Within a few years, plaintiffs used the law to accuse U.S. corporations of violating human rights, including charging Coca-Cola and Drummon Coal with collaborating with Colombia's right-wing paramilitaries to kill or intimidate union leaders. Such lawsuits prompted the National Foreign Trade Council (which successfully fought a Massachusetts law banning government purchases from

companies doing business in Burma) and USA Engage (a major corporate lobby for expanded international trade agreements) to launch a campaign to prevent the use of ATCA to hold multinational corporations responsible for egregious violations of rights. In George W. Bush, these multinational business lobbies found a willing partner.

Only 25 ATCA cases have been filed since 1980, and no corporation has ever been convicted of violating the act. Yet corporate lawyers in their legal briefs portray ATCA lawsuits as a danger to all international investment and a threat to national security. ILRF executive director Terry Collingsworth argues that the courts have thus far restricted ATCA charges to companies that knowingly participated in rights violations, not those that have a mere presence in a country where rights are violated. Consequently, ATCA lawsuits are not likely to discourage foreign investment or interfere with the fight against terrorism.

The suit claimed that those who refused to work were often killed, beaten, tortured, or raped.

But the suits may discourage multinational corporations from joining in human rights abuses. Indeed, ATCA is one of the few legal venues that victims of corporate-abetted terrorism have to seek redress. To argue, as a State Department legal advisor did in a case against Exxon Mobil's operations in Indonesia, that the competitiveness of U.S. business depends on protecting them from suits over extreme violations of fundamental rights is absurd and immoral. In fact, were it true, it would be a damning admission about what many corporations do in their global operations.

Simultaneously, the Bush administration is insisting U.S. soldiers and officials be granted immunity to any action by the International Criminal Courts. In addition, Defense Secretary Donald Rumsfeld recently threatened to move NATO headquarters out of Brussels if Belgium didn't get rid of an already narrowly drawn law that permits the prosecution in Belgium of atrocities that are committed in foreign countries. In short, the Bush administration doesn't want its new imperial rule subject to any legal constraint.

—David Moberg

In These Times

Vol. 27, No. 17

July 21, 2003

www.inthesetimes.com

3 News

Democrats and Greens meet in Washington, and Cambodia finally establishes a tribunal.

6 Appall-o-Meter By Dave Mulcahey

7 In Person By Aaron Sarver

Greg Palast wants you to turn off your TV.

8 Capitol Report By Craig Aaron

Meet the GOP's newest influence-peddler.

9 Back Talk By Susan J. Douglas

Media credibility, a casualty of war.

10 The Third Coast By Salim Muwakkil

Science demystifies race, but who got the memo?

11 Viewpoint By Jeff Epton

Progressives are on the bus. Do we know where we're going?

12 The First Stone By Joel Bleifuss

The Taliban returns.

Features

14 Weapon of Mass Deception

By Frida Berrigan

What the Pentagon doesn't want us to know about depleted uranium.

20 Big Liberty is Watching

By Roberto Lovato

A century after Orwell's birth, reality overtakes his classic.

23 Can Radicals Be Liberals, Too?

By G. William Domhoff

BOOKS: Todd Gitlin's *Letter to a Young Activist*.

25 Error and Liberalism

By James North

BOOKS: Paul Berman joins the Islamophobe chorus.

26 Terror and Radicalism

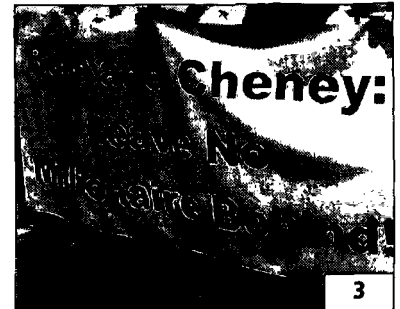
By Pat Aufderheide

FILM: Looking back on the Weather Underground.

30 Go Forth and Be Powerful

By Tony Kushner

A manifesto for today's graduates.



COVER: STEPHANIE SINCLAIR

War Machine

In reply to Mahmood Elahi's letter criticizing this magazine's Iraq coverage (July 7): There was no connection whatsoever between the loathsome Iraqi regime and the criminals who attacked the United States on September 11, 2001, all the sleight-of-hand of the Bush administration and the complacent media notwithstanding. Moreover, this regime never attacked the United States.

The whole point about those who actually did attack the United States is that they have no connection whatsoever with the pitifully weak "rogue regimes" that are the only possible targets to be found to justify a muscle-bound military inflated by the steroids of a \$380 billion defense budget. The Bush administration engages in its bait-and-switch tactics to justify spending astronomical amounts of money on weapons for which there is no rational purpose on this earth.

Dealing with real terrorists in the real world, rather than the ideological fantasy world of the neocons, requires serious intelligence work, serious attention to U.S. policy in parts of the world where we are needlessly creating enemies by the stupid insensitivity and bias of our policies, and intelligent diplomacy to isolate the small numbers of those who are irreducibly hostile from the great majorities of those who have a legitimate beef with these senseless policies.

I would be prepared to listen to a human rights justification for intervention in Iraq or elsewhere if a.) it were multilateral and based on a regime of international law, rather than part of a strategy to destroy the entire post-World War II international legal regime; b.) there was consistency in its application, meaning including as potential targets the thug regimes historically propped up by the United States (the Iraqi regime fell into this category for many years); and c.) this argument were not being put forward by the likes of Donald Rumsfeld, whose hand may still carry traces of blood from his friendly handshake with Saddam Hussein in his capacity as Ronald Reagan's presidential envoy on December 20, 1983.

Rashid Khalidi
Chicago

The Meaning of Cabal

In his editorial "Isn't That Special" (June 23), Joel Bleifuss comments on Seymour Hersh's report on the undue influence wielded by a small group of Pentagon policy advisers and analysts calling themselves "the Cabal." But *kabbalah*, the mystical tradition

in Judaism, is a transmitted tradition to which anyone can aspire. Western *kabbalah* has its occult side, but even that is open to anyone who cares to "walk the paths."

The use of the term "cabal" in the sense of a powerful, manipulative, shadowy political bloc in high places can be traced to Restoration England (the reign of Charles II). In current usage, the term gets its visceral rhetorical punch from the apparently widely shared, projected fantasy of a small, potent group of Jews who run the world from underground or behind the scenes.

Given the current administration's fundamentalist Christian end-time eschatology and talk of crusades against Muslims, it doesn't surprise me to see certain of its members use the term "cabal" in this way. However, I suggest that when we progressives report on their behavior, we use metaphors that more accurately reflect their cultural heritage and methods of functioning. A posse, a gang, a fraternity, a treehouse of superheroes, a Pentagon affinity group ... or better yet, a board of directors.

Michele Gale-Sinex
Olympia, Washington

Smash the DLC

We must identify the Democratic Leadership Council as a major enemy of those who want a regime change in Washington ("Meet Howard Dean," May 28). It is not just their shameful attacks on Dean and Dennis Kucinich, but their success in putting a leash on every recog-

nized spokesperson of the Democratic Party. When someone breaks through, like Sen. Robert Byrd, they trivialize what was said. When Sen. Joseph Biden was given the chance on *Meet the Press* to speak up about Iraq's missing weapons of mass destruction, he could only bring himself to offer excuses for Bush et al. and suggested that the focus should be on "our" intelligence sources.

It is now evident that we faced no immediate danger from Iraq. The leaders of Britain, Spain, and other supporters of the war now face an angry public led by many of their elected representatives. Only in the United States are the people without a party in opposition to those in power. Why? Because the DLC demands and obtains strict adherence to its notion of when and how and on what terms it is permissible to attack Bush. The DLC played a major part in holding Gore back and thus losing in 2000. It is directly accountable for the massive congressional defeats of 2002. And unless we dethrone the DLC now, it will guarantee a loss in 2004. It must be disbanded. We must lead an attack to discredit the DLC now.

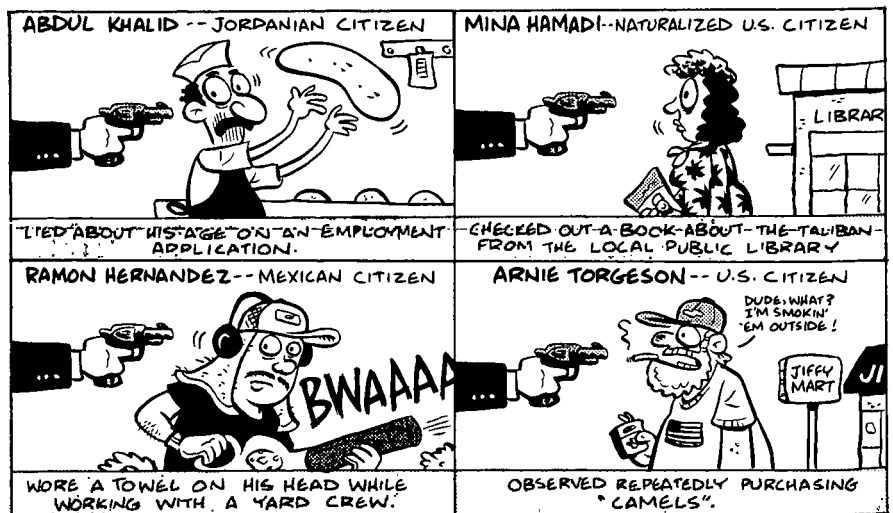
Ken Tilsen
Hudson, Wisconsin

Send letters to:
IN THESE TIMES
2000 N. Milwaukee Ave.
Chicago, IL 60647
Or e-mail: letters@inthesetimes.com

Terry LaBan

THE U.S.A. PATRIOT ACT RECENT DETAINEEES

LABANIT003



Registering the Peaceniks

Democrats and Greens meet in Washington to "Take Back America"

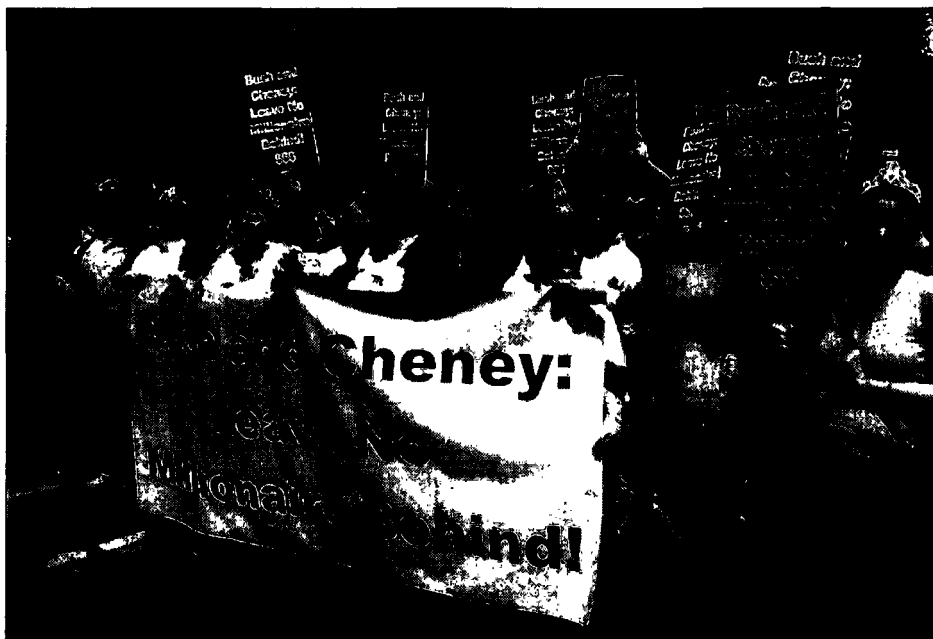
By Eric Laursen

WASHINGTON—Jesse Jackson closed out a well-attended conference of Democratic Party progressives on June 6 with a plea that probably would have got him hissed off the stage just a year ago. "We must open the Democratic door back up to Ralph Nader and the Greens," Jackson said. "We need those 3 million votes. We can't do it without them and win." Jackson's audience broke into cheers and applause. In the hallway outside the meeting room, conference participants could buy copies of *The Ralph Nader Reader*.

The three-day Take Back America conference brought together some 1,500 Democrats, including union members; advocates for education, seniors, and the disabled; activists with religious organizations; and peaceniks and poverty fighters. The conference was organized by the Campaign for America's Future, a Washington-based political action group founded in 1996 as a counterweight to the conservative Democratic Leadership Council. CAF annual conferences have become a beacon for progressives concerned about the Democratic Party's weakened commitment to social justice and about its ability to offer a distinct alternative to Republicans.

But party loyalty counts for a lot, and for the past two years, Nader-bashing had been something of a ritual at CAF events. That may be changing, as "the democratic wing of the Democratic Party" is making tentative steps to pull Greens, antiwar and global justice activists into its camp in hopes of beating back the party's conservative wing and replacing George W. Bush with a progressive next year.

"The antiwar movement has brought a lot of people into politics who weren't before," said Tom Andrews, national director of the Win Without War coalition. He cites the hundreds of thousands who took to the streets before the Iraq invasion:



A satirical "Millionaire March" to Vice President Cheney's house after a June 4-6 conference in Washington.

"They could make the difference if we get them to vote Democratic."

Illinois Rep. Jan Schakowsky described how she had advised a group of nuns on their way to serve time in prison for civil disobedience at the School of the Americas to "take voter registration forms to every rally and protest you go to, and get [protesters] to register!"

The strategy appeals to liberal lawmakers, whose clout in Washington has slipped even as causes that tend not to place high on their agenda—especially the struggles against corporate globalization and the Bush war on terror—generate grassroots enthusiasm and commitment. Some progressives are now accusing the Democratic leadership of having led them into disaster in the 2002 elections by letting Bush intimidate them rather than challenging his imperialistic foreign policy.

Many party loyalists who have typically supported candidates friendly to the CAF's views have become swept up in the new causes themselves. Their passion has carried some of them a long way, and may have startled some CAF organizers, who included a panel on national security and a workshop on the future of the peace movement in this year's conference agenda—but whose position paper for the event called for "a muscular internationalism" and an "unrelenting global campaign to isolate terrorist groups."

Attendees applauded vigorously when Bernice Powell Jackson, executive minister of the United Church of Christ's Justice and Witness Ministries, raised a sensitive subject: "Is it right to support Israel when it won't end its illegal occupation of Palestinian territory?" Benjamin Barber, a principal of the Democracy Collaborative, an academic-activist alliance, also found receptive listeners when he charged the United States with creating "an empire of fear" that ignores the reality of global interdependence in the 21st century. And economist James Galbraith caught the wave when he concluded a survey of the Bush economy with a warning that "the price of empire, historically, is bankruptcy."

A certain unease about this new public—both Democratic stalwarts who have recently become somewhat radicalized and nonvoters finding their voices through the antiwar and global justice movements—showed in the presidential candidates' speeches to the conference. Seven of the nine Democratic presidential hopefuls spoke—including House Minority Leader Richard Gephardt on videotape—while the more conservative Sen. Joe Lieberman of Connecticut and Sen. Bob Graham of Florida stayed away. All were happy to use Bush's embarrassment over Iraq's stubbornly missing weapons of mass destruction to score easy

points. But most were careful not to comment on the occupation itself, and none bothered to explain what they would do about the U.S.-made mess in Iraq if they actually took office.

By contrast, attendees gave a warm reception to candidate Howard Dean, former governor of Vermont, who attracted media attention with his antiwar stance before the invasion. And they erupted in wild applause when Rep. Dennis Kucinich of Ohio announced he had introduced a resolution in the House demanding that the administration produce evidence of WMDs—and promised that his first act as president would be to “cancel” NAFTA and the WTO. Former Illinois Sen. Carol Moseley Braun, whose speech at first generated little enthusiasm, equally struck a nerve when she accused Bush of “pandering to fear to keep us at war until the elections are over.”

None of this is surprising, given how the war has changed many politically involved Democrats' lives. In a random sample, almost two dozen attendees said they had devoted some time during the past year to organizing against U.S. aggression in the Middle East or to attending antiwar rallies. And they took a dim view of “progressive” Democratic candidates who voted to give Bush sweeping war powers last year, such as Gephardt and Massachusetts Sen. John Kerry. A straw poll of conference attendees gave Dean 65 percent of their votes for president, while Kucinich took most of the rest.

The hint of insurgency rippling through the crowd of delegates—it was the CAF's largest gathering ever—carried over to other issues. Author Barbara Ehrenreich drew favorable comments when she challenged the labor movement to broaden its focus on wages and benefits. The AFL-CIO, she said, should devise a workers' bill of rights to address the oppressive atmosphere in workplaces, where workers often are subject to video surveillance, forced to take random drug tests, and in some places are not even allowed to speak to each other. “How can we talk about having a democracy in the United States when people spend eight hours a day in a dictatorship?” Ehrenreich asked.

Whether the Take Back America conference will really help the CAF harness the new power animating its constituency—or merely demonstrated the distance many

Democrats have traveled from their leaders—will become clearer in the next 17 months. Before the conference, the Democratic Leadership Council circulated an internal memo, leaked to the press, that warned, “The great myth of the current cycle is the misguided notion that the hopes and dreams of activists represent the heart and soul of the Democratic Party.”

CAF organizers weren't buying it, but they conceded that the party's most

beyond the party to Greens, independents, and alienated nonvoters. “It still needs to be understood by those trying to reinvent the Democratic Party that they have to take seriously the issues that have impassioned so many progressives in this country,” she argues.

After attending United For Peace and Justice's national conference in Chicago, which took place the weekend after Take Back America and adopted a program of



Rep. Dennis Kucinich: As president, he would “cancel” NAFTA and the WTO.

fiercely political members may not be completely satisfied with Democratic decisions over the next year. “Washington lobbyists and grassroots organizers both have to shift gears,” says CAF co-director Roger Hickey. “I personally think we probably will be stuck with a Democratic nominee who voted for the war, and it's important that we be sophisticated enough to take our policy positions into the Democratic Party.”

Medea Benjamin, a Green and the co-founder of antiwar group Code Pink, helped lead the conference's panel on the peace movement. Benjamin says there should have been a panel on reaching out

action for the next year that includes fighting abuse of civil liberties and opposing corporate globalization, Benjamin says she hopes UFPJ and the groups represented at the CAF conference can work together. “The CAF has an incredible role to play in helping us hook in a domestic agenda—health care, affordable housing, education,” she says. “The leaders of both movements need to put some effort into finding ways to come together.”

They aren't there yet: UFPJ delegates also decided to hold mass protest actions next year, not just at the Republican National Convention in New York but also at the Democratic Convention in Boston. ■

Justice Delayed

Cambodia finally establishes war crimes tribunal, but few have high hopes

By Bill Myers

Although the United Nations and Cambodia have finally come to terms on an agreement to try the aging leaders of the Khmer Rouge, there's still a long way to go before the country will see justice.

After six years of back and forth, on-again, off-again negotiations, the United Nations and Cambodia signed a deal June 6 to set up a special court, made up of Cambodian and international jurists, to try those "most responsible" for the Khmer Rouge genocide between 1975 and 1979.

While most observers said the signing was a step forward, there is still a long road ahead. Cambodia's corrupt government, in the midst of national elections, must ratify the deal. And then a U.N. team must fly to Cambodia and work out the logistics, including costs.

Donor countries like France and Japan have pledged enough money to run the tribunals for two years, but "pledges are different than cash in hand," says U.N. spokesman Farhan Haq.

The United States, which brokered the original, mixed-tribunal formula in the first place, now says it won't fund the tribunal. That's thanks to Sen. Mitch McConnell (R-Kentucky), who put a rider onto a 2002 appropriations bill which forbids the United States from funding the tribunal unless President Bush demands it.

McConnell has strange friends in this. Both Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch have blasted the tribunal agreement. Critics don't believe that Cambodian Prime Minister Hun Sen, a former Khmer Rouge foot soldier, has the political will to try the remaining leaders of the Khmer Rouge. Furthermore, critics say, Cambodia can't field enough competent—or even honest—judges to sit on the panel. To make matters worse, two of Cambodia's most prominent judges were assassinated earlier this year. "The system is broken," says one congressional staff member in Washington who has followed Cambodian affairs.

Few involved in the process are thrilled with the agreement, but proponents say that it's still better than nothing. "What happens at the tribunal goes far beyond legal issues, in terms of national reconciliation," says Craig Etcheson, a scholar and one of the foremost experts on the Khmer Rouge.

The Khmer Rouge turned Cambodia into a Maoist labor camp from 1975 to 1979. Estimates say that between 1.7 million and 2.2 million died in the "killing fields."

In the years since the United Nations and Cambodia first began negotiating for the tribunal, two Khmer Rouge leaders, including founder Pol Pot, have died. Most of the rest are in their seventies. Only two are even in custody; the rest live freely in the countryside. Until recently, in fact, former Foreign Minister Ieng Sary—the Khmer Rouge's "Brother No. 3"—traveled on a diplomatic passport.

There is also the stench of American hypocrisy surrounding the tribunal. While there is no question the Cambodian genocide was one of the greatest human-rights breakdowns of the last

bloody century, Cambodia was at war for 30 years. Critics have pointed out that the narrow scope of the tribunal—focusing only on "the worst offenses" during a four-year period—gives a free pass to the United States (and specifically, former Secretary of State Henry Kissinger) for dragging Cambodia into the Vietnam War in the '70s, killing hundreds of thousands and giving rise to the Khmer Rouge regime. The United States and China also supported the Khmer Rouge after the country fell to Vietnam in 1979, sending it money and arms and convincing the United Nations to give Cambodia's seat in the world body to the Khmer Rouge, a position it maintained until the '90s.


Furthermore, the question remains: What to do with the regime's lower-level killers? Many, even among its supporters, fear the tribunal could do more harm than good. "It seems to me that when this tribunal happens," Etcheson says, "and only a handful of senior cadre are prosecuted, you are going to have a lot of people wondering why their own personal 'Pol Pot' is not getting any of this so-called justice."

THIS MODERN WORLD


by TOM TOMORROW

THE revised OFFICIAL BUSH ADMINISTRATION HISTORY OF THE WAR ON IRAQ


DICK CHENEY, SPEECH TO V.F.W. CONVENTION, AUGUST 26, 2002:
"SIMPLY STATED, THERE IS NO DOUBT THAT SADDAM HAS two tractor trailers which could conceivably be used to produce WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION!"



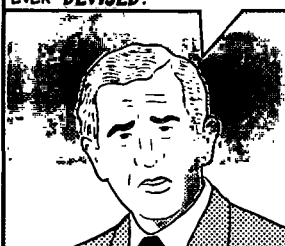
DONALD RUMSFELD, PRESS BRIEFING, FEBRUARY 19, 2003:
"WHAT WE'RE TALKING ABOUT HERE IS THE POTENTIAL FOR two tractor trailers of indeterminate purpose TO BE USED AGAINST OUR COUNTRY!"



COLIN POWELL, RADIO INTERVIEW, FEBRUARY 28, 2003:
"IF IRAQ HAD...GOTTEN RID OF ITS two tractor trailers which with some modifications could possibly be used to manufacture WEAPONS OF MASS DESTRUCTION... WE WOULD NOT BE FACING THE CRISIS THAT WE NOW HAVE BEFORE US!"



GEORGE W. BUSH, ADDRESS TO THE NATION, MARCH 17, 2003:
"INTELLIGENCE GATHERED BY THIS AND OTHER GOVERNMENTS LEAVES NO DOUBT THAT THE IRAQ REGIME CONTINUES TO POSSESS two of the most lethal tractor trailers EVER DEvised!"



SO THERE YOU HAVE IT--THE BUSH ADMINISTRATION WAS RIGHT ALL ALONG!
THE AMERICAN PEOPLE are truly fortunate to have leaders of such caliber!
I, FOR ONE, hope that the President is re-elected in a landslide!

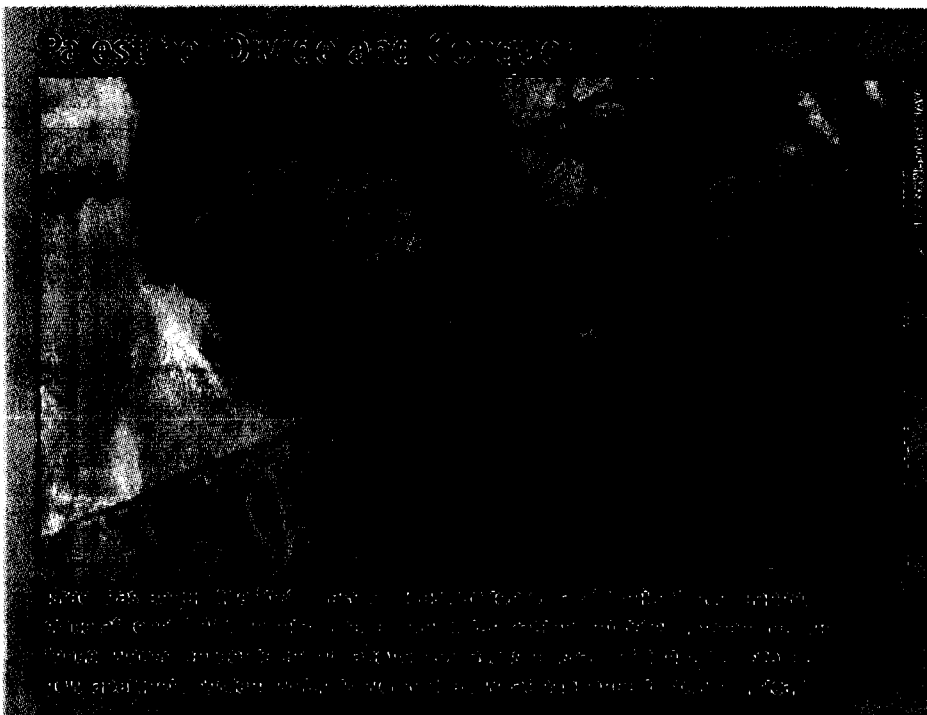


TM TMRRW©2003 ... www.thismodernworld.com

For a direct lesson on the hazards of mixed tribunals, take a look at the June 4 indictment of Liberia's thug-in-chief, Charles Taylor. A U.N.-supported mixed panel conducting trials for Sierra Leone's civil war indicted Taylor for "bearing the greatest responsibility" for the mayhem in Sierra Leone by arming the death squads there. The indictment was unsealed as Taylor was in Ghana trying to work out a deal with his own country's rebels, in talks co-sponsored by the United Nations.

Taylor has since fled back to Liberia's capital, Monrovia, and picked up where he left off. In mid-June, rebels had overtaken the city, attacking and wounding hundreds of civilians.

Maybe it's an extreme example, but no one in Cambodia—or Iraq or Afghanistan, for that matter—can afford to ignore it. Says one U.N. official: "In general, there's always going to be a tension between the cause of justice and the cause of peace." ■



Hey, It Pays the Bills **54**

"When I cut off a hand I cut it off at the joint," says Muhammad Saad Al-Beshi. "If it is a leg the authorities specify where it is to be taken off, so I follow that." Beshi is describing his job as the chief head-lopper of Jeddah, Saudi Arabia. In an interview with the Saudi newspaper *Okaz*, digested by the English-language *Arab News*, Beshi muses on the funny little aspects of life under the black hood—like the nerves he felt as a newbie, decapitating his first malefactor. (He was relieved to see he made a clean cut, and surprised to see that the head rolled a few meters.) Like any workman, he has hectic days, when he dispatches as many as seven wrongdoers. And there are the usual irritations, as when witnesses faint at executions. ("I don't know why they come and watch if they don't have the stomach for it," Beshi complains.) But he is conscientious, unflinchingly seeking clemency for the condemned before it

comes time to execute the sentence. And if he takes his job home with him, it's only for a little help cleaning and honing his tools of the trade. He's even trained a son in the profession. "I sleep very well," Beshi says. "As long as I'm doing God's will, it doesn't matter how many people I execute."

Our Lady of Thermal Pane **24**

When the sealant failed in a window of the eye clinic at Milton Hospital five years ago, no one suspected divine agency at work. Since then, however, heat and moisture have worked their way in according to what some see as a celestial plan. A stain has been left in the image of the Blessed Virgin Mary, clearly (depending on who you're talking to) holding the Baby Jesus, or standing on the globe, or on a mountain, or in a tuft of clouds. In any case, it is the BVM to the crowd of faithful who blocked traffic around the

Massachusetts hospital, according to the *Boston Globe*. The seal had no parents to the parking spaces with difficulty.

Rough Justice **72**

"I would be on the phone with my dad and say, 'I have to hang up, they're coming toward me with a knife.'" That's how Bill White described his five-year stay in a Cook County jail to the *Chicago Sun-Times*. White, 34, lived in a cell with three other inmates, one of whom had to sleep on a mattress on the floor. Conditions were filthy and extremely hazardous to the health. "I have been grabbed by the head and thrown against the wall by guards," White added.

White, who was searching for five years in a jail in Chicago, awaiting a trial when his case—he was accused of murdering two suspected drug dealers—came to trial last month, a judge took a look at the prosecution's evidence and, fifteen minutes later, determined it was worthless. A week later, the state dropped charges against three other men arrested for the murder. Five years of hell for nothing. That's life in Chicago.



TERRY LAGAN

Reporting in Exile

Greg Palast is a reporter for BBC Television's *Newsnight* and Britain's *Guardian* and *Observer* newspapers. His recent book, *The Best Democracy Money Can Buy*, has been on the New York Times bestseller list for 15 weeks (visit www.gregpalast.com for more of his reporting). Palast spoke with *In These Times* during a recent visit to Chicago.

You refer to print publications as "dinosaurs." How do you think the Internet is changing how information is distributed?

The advance of the Internet is that it is harder to shut you down. Bush's buddies sued the *Observer* for an article of mine that exposed their bloody machinations in Tanzania and their gains in Nevada. They were able to crush the print version, but then literally 400 Web sites put up my writing. That's very important. They can't stamp it out, and that's why the "dependent" media is so intent on you knowing how scary and awful and evil the Internet is.

In the United States, people are increasingly reading the *Guardian*, *Le Monde*, and other foreign papers online. When do the *New York Times* and *Washington Post* become irrelevant, especially for foreign reporting?

We just celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Watergate break-in, so that marks 30 years since the *Washington Post* has broken a major investigative story. They are irrelevant right now. Almost nothing original comes out of these big papers. You're just not getting the information.

Your book talks a lot about business connections between the Bush family and the bin Laden family in Saudi Arabia.

I don't want to overstate the connection between the Bushes and the bin Ladens, because that underplays the connection between the Bush clique and Adnan Khashoggi, the Saudi arms dealer, and the connection between George W. Bush and Sheik Abdullah Taha Baksh, the guy who saved Harken Energy (which is George W. Bush's former oil company) from extinction. Baksh is also, according to French intelligence, a guy who through indirect routes funded al-Qaeda. How come we aren't investigating this guy? Does it

have to do with it being hard to investigate the president's business partner?

How do you think people are reacting to Republicans, who in 1994 were screaming for a balanced budget amendment, and who are now endorsing huge budget deficits?

People are picking up that they are being skinned alive. The war in Iraq has become the weapon of mass distraction. Progressives have to make sure we don't let the jewels be stolen while we're looking at Iraq. That's why I won't give up reporting on places like Venezuela and the attempt to overthrow the elected government there. I keep reporting on what the World Bank is up to and the inside documents there because it is thievery with both hands. The Bush family is making a whole new game out of this, on a different level than anyone has ever imagined. You never know where Bush family bank accounts end and American foreign policy begins. It's really serious stuff, and it doesn't matter your political spectrum, the average person is starting to pick this up.

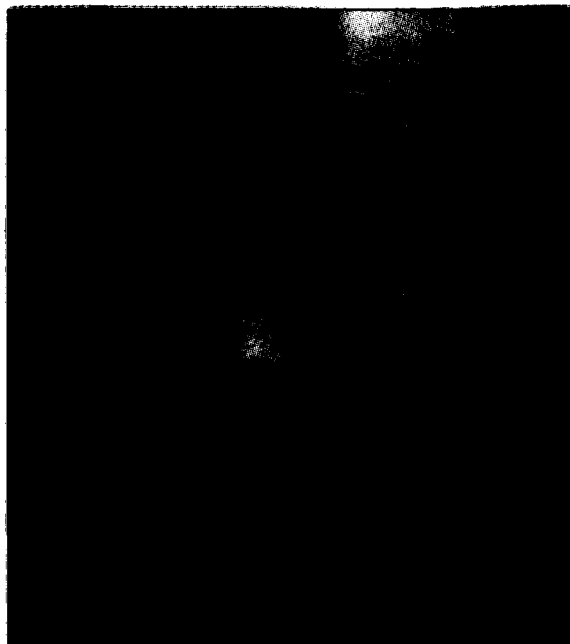
What do you think about the prospect of a liberal radio network, which there has been so much buzz about?

It is not only a buzz. I have actually signed a letter of intent with the liberal radio media consortium. We don't need to compete with Rush Limbaugh. We don't need another fat windbag on the left. What we need is real information so we can make people's brains wake up. There is this bullshit TV hypnosis going on in America. America's real drug problem is called television.

How far are we from criminalizing dissent when Sy Hersh is called a terrorist by a State Department official?

Things are going to get worse before they get better. But we've been here before. This is not as bad as the McCarthy era, yet. Americans really do stand up to the horseshit. That's the point of the last chapter of my book. In

America, because we have been brought up to believe everyone has a say in our democracy, once in a while when Americans are told "have a nice day" and they're given that cheesy shit-eating grin from the presidential spokesman, they say, "Screw you, we're not eating it anymore." It happened in Vietnam, it happened in the civil rights movement, and going back to the populist movement, aboli-



DANIEL MORDUCHOWICZ

Greg Palast wants you to turn off your TV and find out what's really going on.

tionist movement. We have had a lot of successful movements.

We'll do it again. I'm not worried about America. One of the problems, even on the left, is that we have become accustomed to thinking, if I read it in the *New York Times* it must be true. And we have to begin trusting our own sources.

How does the average individual know what is a good news source?

Please tell us you wouldn't lie to us—that *In These Times* wouldn't lie to us.

Aaron Sarver, associate publisher, enjoys painting *In These Times* walls when not performing other business tasks.

Banana Republicans

By Craig Aaron

Moving to any new city can be disconcerting, but Washington seems farther away from Chicago than just 700 miles. It's not just the local vernacular of "mark-ups" and "scoring," all the ink spilled on obscure backbenchers and legislative minutiae, or even my stroll every morning past the young Stepford Republicrats heading for Capitol Hill in their brand new navy blazers.

I couldn't pin down my uneasiness at first, though I certainly noticed the omnipresent concrete barriers outside government buildings, the blinking "Code Orange" warnings on the freeways, and the F-16 flybys that regularly rattle my windows. I won't be the first to observe that Washington is starting to feel like the seat of a Latin American dictatorship. Not long ago, a line in *The New Yorker* captured this sentiment, comparing the United States to "a banana republic on a bad day." Or maybe it's just the humidity.

So perhaps I shouldn't be surprised at the lack of outrage over the appointment of uber-lobbyist Ed Gillespie as chairman of the Republican National Committee (RNC). After all, who's better qualified to lead the GOP than a man who helped write the Contract With America and made millions as a corporate shill? When he's rubber-stamped by the RNC in July, Gillespie will be given unrivaled access, influence, and opportunity to further the interests of his corporate benefactors and his own high-priced lobbying firm.

Gillespie, 41, is fond of describing his Horatio Alger-like rise from Senate parking-lot attendant to White House insider. After more than a decade on the staff of one-time House Majority Leader Dick Armey (R-Texas) and a previous stint at the RNC under Haley Barbour, Gillespie landed on K Street. In 2000, Gillespie set up his own lobbying shop with former Clinton White House Counsel Jack Quinn, who is perhaps best known for arranging the pardon of fugitive financier Marc Rich. According to Public Citizen's analysis of federal disclosure reports, Quinn, Gillespie & Associates raked in more than \$27 million by the end of 2002.

Gillespie's new position will make him an influence-peddler nonpareil. As the party's chief fundraiser and spokesman, Gillespie will be charged with raising hundreds of millions for the 2004 elections and with helping determine which candidates will receive the money. In other words, he'll hold the purse strings for the candidates his firm will be lobbying.

Few nongovernmental positions in American politics offer so much potential



for corruption. As party chairman, Gillespie will be in constant contact with the White House and other GOP leaders, giving him the inside track on vote counts in Congress. His lobbying partners and clients would find such information invaluable. Why hire another lobbyist, when you can cut out the middleman and go straight to the decision-makers themselves?

Ricocheting between the roles of political strategist, corporate flack, and voluble pundit, Gillespie has demonstrated a disregard for the notion of conflict of interest throughout his career. In fact, capitalizing on those conflicts has made Gillespie a success.

When George W. Bush took office, Gillespie joined the transition team as the unpaid acting director of public affairs for the Commerce Department, helping incoming Secretary Don Evans choose new staff. After only 15 days with the new administration, Gillespie was back at work as a full-time lobbyist. And he didn't hesitate to arrange meetings for his clients with the Commerce Department officials he helped hire.

Before its collapse in 2001, Enron paid Quinn Gillespie \$700,000 to lobby against the regulation of Western electricity mar-

kets following the California power crisis. Describing Gillespie as the company's "hired gun," one ex-Enron employee later told the *Washington Post*, "Whenever we had to get in to see a Republican, the first call was to Gillespie."

Gillespie regularly bounces between campaign work—most recently as an adviser to Elizabeth Dole's 2002 North Carolina Senate bid—and pushing the interests of private corporations. Indeed, he has become adept at using corporate money to hype Bush's political agenda. In 2001, he channeled \$100,000 from Enron and DaimlerChrysler via two right-wing groups to the 21st Century Energy Project, an organization Gillespie himself directed. The project bought print and television ads "to counter enviro-leftist propaganda" and tout the administration's energy plan.

Gillespie has continued to represent some of the country's worst corporate scofflaws. Tyson Foods, the country's largest meatpacker, paid \$440,000 to Quinn Gillespie last year to help burnish the company's image after federal charges were filed against it for conspiring to smuggle illegal immigrants into the country to work at its poultry plants. Quinn Gillespie also lobbied on "wage and hour issues," namely a Labor Department law-

Ed Gillespie's new position as GOP chairman will make him an influence-peddler nonpareil.

suit against Tyson for \$300 million in back pay owed to its workers.

Gillespie has promised not to actively lobby while serving as party chief. And his conflicts of interest may seem minor compared to the larger outrages of the Bush junta. But when the media and the opposition party give a free pass to yet another Banana Republican, it only furthers the privatization of public service. Just business as usual? Call it the banality of corruption.

Craig Aaron is an investigative reporter for Public Citizen's Congress Watch. Portions of this article originally appeared in the report "Ed Gillespie: Embedded Lobbyist" (available in its entirety at www.citizen.org). The views expressed here are his alone.

Nose Loops: A Media Accessory

By Susan J. Douglas

It would hardly be an overstatement to say that the late spring and early summer of 2003 have been one of the lowest points in U.S. media history. And I'm not even including the highly dispiriting spectacle of eight-year-olds on Fox's talent show *American Juniors* saying that what they want most out of life is "to be famous" or "to have a really expensive car."

The Jayson Blair scandal has received the most coverage in recent weeks—not least by the *New York Times* itself. But very few news outlets (not surprisingly) have stood back to look at the broader trends at work. Certainly the most embarrassing (for the news media) and worrying (for the rest of us) has been their nearly complete abdication to the news-management and disinformation campaigns of Team Bush. (And let's not ignore the increasingly central role the Pentagon seems to be playing in news production.) Team Bush's short-term goal may be to use the press to report the administration's version of events as if it were truth. But its long-term goal is to discredit, completely, the entire field of journalism.

Saving Private Jessica: oops, not the heroic Hollywood action film we thought it was. End of war in Iraq: oops, not the triumph Bush hoped to call a wrap when he zoomed in à la Tom Cruise onto the U.S.S. *Abraham Lincoln*. Weapons of mass destruction: oops, not the immediate dire threat Bush insisted they were in a March 6 audience with a supine, cowed press corps. Weapons of mass destruction probably destroyed by Saddam: oops, information may have been deliberately leaked to the *Times*' Judith Miller by the Pentagon.

In mid-May, the BBC program *Correspondent* aired an investigative report that described the "saving Private Lynch" mini-drama as "one of the most stunning pieces of news management ever conceived." Disputes continue over whether the Pentagon deliberately staged the entire rescue, providing blanks for the soldiers to fire and ensuring that night cameras were there to capture the whole thing. But it turns out that Lynch was not stabbed, did not have to single-handedly fight off Iraqi troops, and that the doctors in the hospital where she was supposedly

imprisoned not only took care of her but also reportedly tried to hand her over to U.S. forces and were rebuffed. (Whether she really has "amnesia"—how Hollywood can you get?—is also now unclear.)

But the U.S. press bought the original story, hook, line and sinker. *Variety* reported that NBC immediately planned a made-for-TV movie because "This story is *Mission Impossible*, but it's real." (One wonders, will NBC actually go through with this, given



recent revelations? Keep your eyes peeled.) *Newsweek* featured a huge cover story titled, of course, "Saving Private Lynch." (*Newsweek* later featured a huge cover story on the Jayson Blair scandal, but nothing on its own very public duping by the military in the Lynch affair.)

On May 29, when reporters asked Jessica Lynch's parents about the recent revelations, they replied, "We're really not supposed to talk about that subject." Hmmm. This seems like a pretty big story. And in Canada and Britain, it was. But the following week, just days after the Lynch family press conference (and after the FCC handed over yet more media outlets to huge conglomerates), the second biggest story on the networks, after the "road map" pseudo-event, was Martha Stewart's indictment. *Newsweek* covered that week with the story "Men's Bodies." Why aren't the networks and other news organizations outraged about how they've been misled about virtually everything in Iraq? Is it really just too embarrassing? Can you imagine the young Dan Rather taking this from Richard Nixon?

There have been exceptions to the recent abject press prostrations, most notably the hard-nosed, ever-skeptical

Martha Raddatz on ABC, whose reporting and demeanor suggest that she thinks the whole administration line on WMDs (as hip people call them) is as objectionable as a dead carp. In one report she reran a September soundbite from Donald Rumsfeld in which he insisted: "We know they have weapons of mass destruction. ... There is not any debate about it." Then Raddatz reported that Rumsfeld had in fact received a Defense Intelligence Agency memo stating, "There is no reliable information on whether Iraq is producing and stockpiling chemical weapons or whether Iraq has or will establish its production facilities." And according to the *Tyndall Report*, NBC's Jim Miklaszewski reminded viewers, "not a single one of the Baath Party regime's 12 Most Wanted is in custody. There is no evidence that any of the top leaders have been killed." And the *Washington Post* has just investigated its own credulous coverage of the Lynch affair. Can't we have more of this?

In the aftermath of the various resignations at the *New York Times*, news coverage has emphasized the need for soul-searching at the "grey lady." Not to let the *Times* off the hook (and to some of us the Judith Miller scandal, as laid out by Russ Baker in *The Nation*, seems much worse than Blair's

The long-term goal is to discredit the entire field of journalism.

fictions), but the real disgrace is how the vast majority of the press corps has let Team Bush open up their nose and stick a giant gold loop through it to better lead them from one scripted event to the next. Now that the road map is already in flames, it's not clear what Team Bush will trot out next to distract the media from the chaos in Iraq and the ongoing economic problems in the United States. Nuclear weapons in Iran? In Korea? But with 46 percent of those surveyed telling pollsters they trust the news media either not much or not at all, and with Bush news management making utter fools out of journalists and their news organizations, isn't it time for the press to rip the ring out of their noses—or even loosen it just a tad? ■

The End of Race?

By Salim Muwakkil

I'm not sure if many Americans have noticed, but the concept of race has taken some devastating hits in recent years. Everywhere one looks in academia these days—from the abstract precincts of critical theory to the hard laboratories of molecular genetics—once-mighty notions of racial taxonomy have fallen hard.

The latest assault on race was a three-part PBS series, *Race: The Power of an Illusion*. Produced by California Newsreel, the series covers a wide range of race-related issues. But the program's title is its major point: Racial differences are illusory.

For many Americans, this is pretty radical stuff. Well before the republic was founded, the belief in racial hierarchy was deeply embedded in our national culture, and there it endures. A person's economic and social well-being remains closely correlated to racial identity.

Notwithstanding those socio-economic distinctions, the idea of racial difference seems obvious; people with a certain skin color and hair texture also tend to have common behavioral traits. However, science is revealing that those observable, "natural" differences are social constructions rather than biological facts.

"The Difference Between Us," the first episode of *Race*, explains that humanity emerged in Africa about 150,000 to 200,000 years ago and began migrating out about 70,000 years ago. As humans spread across the planet, populations intermingled, creating a variety of genetic interrelationships. These are not always what one might expect: Some Europeans have more genes in common with Nigerians than do Nigerians with Ethiopians, and so on. Most variation is within, not between, "races."

The first segment also notes that many of our "phenotypic" characteristics, like skin color, evolved recently, after we left Africa. But traits like intelligence, musical ability, and physical aptitude are of a more ancient genetic vintage and thus are common to all populations.

As if on cue, a recent archeological find provided corroborating fossil evidence for this genetic view of human history. The June 12 issue of *Nature* revealed that scientists working in northeast Ethiopia

found the 160,000-year-old remains of two adults and a child that are said to be the earliest human remains ever discovered. According to Tim White, the University of California paleoanthropologist who led the team, "this discovery means our roots are African."

According to the *New York Times*, the theory of an African genesis of humanity had gained wide support in the last two decades thanks to the research findings of



the growing science of molecular genetics. These genetic studies, based on evolutionary changes in mitochondrial DNA, which is passed from mother to daughter, have concluded that humanity had a common ancestor in Africa—the so-called "African Eve."

Before the advent of high-tech genetics, the reigning doctrines of white supremacy discouraged any consideration of an African genesis of humanity. And despite increasing archaeological evidence, many anthropologists resisted tracing humanity's origins to the so-called Dark Continent.

The more radical white supremacists postulated that there was a "multiregional evolution," in which Europeans evolved from another branch of hominids altogether—the hearty Neanderthals. However, genetic studies have revealed no Neanderthal DNA in modern humans.

A preponderance of genetic evidence reveals the ironic fact that the same Europeans who created the idea of race and white supremacy are genetic progeny of the Africans they devalued. With this view of history, it's clear that the concept of race is an insidious fiction created primarily to justify exploitation, slavery, and imperial conquest.

Race's second episode, "The Story We Tell," explores this sordid history, tracing

the origins of the racial idea to the European conquest of the New World and to the American slave system. We see how the logic of racial hierarchy, which placed Africans on the lowest rung of humanity, allowed self-professed Christians to justify the institution of racial slavery.

New York University historian Robin D.G. Kelley points out that the Enlightenment idea of freedom led to the ideology of white supremacy: "The problem that they had to figure out is how can we promote liberty, freedom, democracy on the one hand, and a system of slavery and exploitation of people who are non-white on the other?" They did it by dehumanizing enslaved Africans.

The episode notes that by the mid-19th century, the idea of racial hierarchy and its corollary, white supremacy, had become conventional wisdom. "The idea found fruition in racial science, Manifest Destiny, and our imperial adventures abroad," reads the PBS Web site for the episode.

The final episode, "The House We Live In," focuses on the ways U.S. institutions and policies advantage some groups at the expense of others. It outlines the historical trajectory of racial disadvantage and shows how it remains easily discernable in the wealth gap and disparities in other social indices. The segment also examines the "unmarked" race of white people. Here the documentary slides in some of the insights developed by the nascent

As the sciences discredit long-held notions of racial taxonomy, racism endures.

"Whiteness" movement, which defines the very idea of white identity as an ideology of racial domination.

Race: The Power of an Illusion concludes that racial inequality will remain a feature of this nation's social structures until we seriously address the legacy of past discrimination and confront the historical meaning of race.

The producers hope their series will blow some fresh air through a stagnant social debate and stir some new interest. I hope they're right, but I doubt it. ■

Next Stop ...

By Jeff Epton

Such optimism. Such scheming. Such giddiness. It has been nearly 40 years since so many have felt so compelled to fight back, to take on an imperial president and oppose a sweeping corporate agenda.

The antiwar movement, celebrated or otherwise, is the big story. The outcome of the assault on Iraq was no surprise. The war was over before organized opposition, which significantly delayed its launch, could stop it altogether.

But this antiwar movement is different. It refuses to demobilize. As many who took to the streets now realize, the war wasn't the main issue, after all. It was, and is, the Bush administration. Consequently, this antiwar movement promises to be a feature of the political landscape, at least through the next national election.

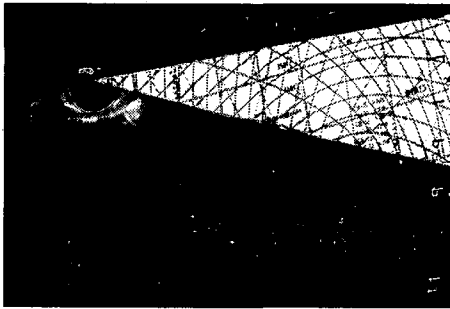
Such endurance is not simply the result of some newly developed political sophistication on the left, though that might be a factor. Technology, or more precisely, the Internet and computer databases, have created a communication infrastructure that allows small groups of activists to stay in touch with larger groups of like-minded individuals, all ready to be mobilized on a moment's notice for a finite purpose.

Internet-based initiatives, such as www.MoveOn.org and www.TrueMajority.org, are in regular contact with tens of thousands of responsive citizens. In Chicago, '60s radicals Carl Davidson and Marilyn Katz have launched an anti-Bush Peace and Justice Voters campaign (www.noiraqwar-chicago.org) and are connecting with similar initiatives nationwide. Instant communication and far-flung coordination are now available to social justice movements. Peace, and more, may yet be possible.

And though congressional Democrats as a group supported the war, shared in the attack on civil liberties, and offered little resistance to tax cuts, the Democratic party appears to be moving toward a more determinedly anti-Bush agenda. Al Sharpton, Carol Moseley-Braun, Howard Dean, and Dennis Kucinich, all campaigning on partially or thoroughly progressive platforms, constitute almost half the field in the Democratic presidential primary.

The recent Take Back America conference, sponsored by the Campaign for America's Future, featured Jesse Jackson promoting a Democratic presidential strategy that opens the door to Greens and Nader voters.

Terrified by what the Bush administration has already done, and swapping nightmarish predictions of what comes next, progressives inside and outside the Democratic Party are motivated.



But the let's-beat-Bush-express isn't going to travel as far as its riders believe. In fact, a large number of progressive voters have ridden similar buses to nowhere before. It may seem that we are headed to the right place, but it's only a sense of urgency that makes it so.

This Bush can be beaten, of course. Bush the elder, entering the 1992 campaign on the strength of his own Gulf War victory, looked like a sure winner for re-election. But a weak economy, combined with Clinton's effective campaign strategy and winning personality, easily undid the Bush success story.

Clinton's victory, though, turned out to set the stage for the disillusionment of progressives and a right-wing resurgence on behalf of George the younger.

This time around may be no different. Electoral success in 2004 will have progres-

sives momentarily congratulating themselves that the worst has been averted, but betrayal, let down, and demobilization will be almost certain to follow. That is, if all we do is board the let's-beat-Bush-express without a plan for where we go next.

Without a strategic vision, the place we get to when the bus ride ends is a guaranteed disappointment. Hopefully, it will be the United States without George W. Bush. But it won't be election reform, it won't be national health care, it won't be peace, and it won't be justice.

And it will be progressives, on the sidelines once again, wondering when our agenda is going to have its turn, and then, four or eight years later, watching as Jeb Bush, or maybe the photogenic, bilingual George P. Bush, ascends to the Imperial Presidency.

What's the solution then? By all means, let's beat Bush. But please, let's not pretend that that is equivalent to a strategic goal. Fighting back is not a strategy, and neither is voting for a candidate who isn't George Bush. Those are tactics—necessary first steps, perhaps, but no more. We should be asking where we want to go *before* we board the bus. In other words, what's the route to where we want to go?

Do we want to defeat Bush and then launch a campaign for national health care? If so, where and when do we transfer buses? Do we want to take the Pentagon apart, rebuild the justice system, launch an anticorporate, economic justice campaign, and do something real? Can we put forward a vision for a transformed nation, around which we can build and sustain a movement?

Or, one more time, am I just going to be a progressive bozo on the next bus to nowhere, with you sitting beside me? ■

The Public Square & the Chicago Historical Society Present a Special Screening of

Dam/age

A Film by Aradhana Seth with Arundhati Roy

A Conversation with the Filmmaker follows the Film

July 11th, 2003 at 7:00 PM
Chicago Historical Society, Clark Street at North

(\$10.00 General Admission. Free for Public Square Members & Chicago Historical Society Members. Go to <http://www.ticketweb.com> to purchase tickets

THE FIRST

By Joel Bleifuss

Death Camp Ready

Plans are underway to build a death chamber at Camp Delta, the U.S. base in Guantanamo Bay. "We're getting ready so we won't be starting from scratch," Major-General Geoffrey Miller explained to the Associated Press. The execution facility is being constructed for those among the 680 "most dangerous, best-trained, vicious killers on the face of the Earth" (as Donald Rumsfeld put it) who will be sentenced to death by secret military tribunals. The administration has defined the men captured in the war against the Taliban as "enemy combatants," and thereby argued that since they are not "prisoners of war," they are not entitled to the legal protections guaranteed by the Geneva Convention.

Old Friends

Meanwhile, in Pakistan, the Bush administration has held secret negotiations with the Taliban in an effort to bring them back into the Afghan government, according to a report in the *Asia Times*.

A meeting between representatives of Pakistan's Inter-Services Intelligence (ISI), the FBI, and Taliban leaders was held at Pakistan's Samungli Air Force base near Quetta, according to a Pakistani jihad leader who arranged the meeting and spoke with *Asia Times*.

This source said the United States set four demands the Taliban must meet before they would be let back into the government: Mullah Omar, the Taliban's supreme leader who remains at large, must step down; foreign fighters aiding the Taliban must be thrown out of the country; captive U.S. and allied soldiers must be released; and Afghans living abroad, particularly in the United



The Taliban, who may once again become U.S. allies, banned any depiction of human images. Yet on August 6, 2001, this Taliban man snuck into a Kabul passport shop to have his portrait taken.

States and England, must be allowed to run for office. Apparently the Taliban representatives rejected the first demand but were willing to discuss the other three.

The Bush administration reached out to the Taliban because Afghanistan is becoming increasingly ungovernable. The U.S.-backed regime in Kabul controls only the capital. In the countryside, the guerrilla war, which is targeting U.S. and allied forces, is escalating.

The *Asia Times* reports:

According to people familiar with Afghan resistance movements, the one that has emerged over the past year and a half since the fall of the Taliban is about four times as strong as the movement that opposed Soviet invaders for nearly a decade starting in 1979. The key reason for this is that the previous Taliban government—which is dispersed almost intact in the country after capitulating to advancing Northern Alliance forces without a fight—is backed by the most powerful force in Afghanistan: clerics and religious students.

The Bush administration is not only worried about getting caught in an Afghan quagmire, it is seeing red. A large number of former Afghan Communists

are among the 2 million refugees who have returned home since the fall of the Taliban, which you will recall in the '80s got financial and military support from the United States for their war against the former Soviet-backed regime in Kabul.

The *Asia Times* reports:

At present, Kabul is divided into two main factions. The first is pro-U.S., represented by the U.S. and allied troops and those loyal to President Hamid Karzai. The second is pro-Russian and pro-Iranian, represented by Defense Minister General Qasim Fahim and his Northern Alliance forces. Although the camps are cooperating at present, they are silently building their support bases to make a grab for full power once the present interim administration runs its course, a process that is due to begin in October with a *loya jirga* (grand council).

The Bush administration is concerned that the thousands of returning Afghan Communists, who have no love of the United States, could help tip the balance in favor of General Fahim. Enter the Taliban, who are our recent enemies but also old friends, thanks to their unparalleled record of squashing Communists and other secular dissidents.

Spys 'R' Us

The New Jersey-based Community Anti-Terrorism Training Initiative, or CAT Eyes, is looking for a few million good spies to join "a modern civil defense network."

CAT Eyes' objective, according to www.cateyesprogram.com, is to establish a "National Neighborhood Watch" by recruiting and training "a team of volunteers dedicated to be the eyes and ears of the 'good' side to observe and report possible 'evil' activities." Graduates of the program are known as Community Anti-terrorism Trained Individuals—CAT Eyes, get it?

Police departments on the East Coast and in parts of the Midwest have already adopted the CAT Eyes program, whose motto is, "Watching America with Pride, not Prejudice."

"I envision 100 million Americans looking for indicators of terrorism and promptly reporting it to a central database where it would get analyzed," said CAT Eyes co-founder Mike Licata, a high school teacher and retired Air Force officer, in an interview with the *Boston Globe*.

Were CAT Eyes to reach its goal of 100 million neighborhood informers—about one in three Americans—it would exceed the record of informants per capita set by Stasi, the East German secret police, which managed to recruit 2 million neighborhood informers—about one in eight East Germans.

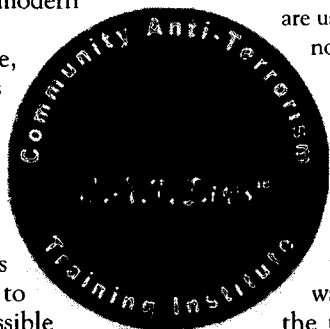
NGOs—No-Good Organizations

The American Enterprise Institute (AEI) is setting out to counter the subversive influence of Amnesty International, Doctors Without Borders, Oxfam, and other nongovernmental organizations that are pursuing global agendas that undermine the power of both the U.S. government and U.S. corporations. To that end, AEI recently sponsored a day-long conference, "Nongovernmental Organizations: The Growing Power of the Unelected Few."

According to AEI:

NGOs have created their own rules and regulations and demanded that governments and corporations abide by those

rules. ... Politicians and corporate leaders are often forced to respond to the NGO media machine, and the resources of taxpayers and shareholders are used in support of ends they did not sanction.



George Washington University political scientist Jarol Manheim told conference participants NGOs are pursuing "a new and pervasive form of conflict" against corporations that he terms a "Biz-war," which also happens to be the title of his forthcoming book.

Manheim is particularly upset at NGOs that sponsor shareholder resolutions that ask corporations to respect human rights and the environment. "Big shareholders are getting embarrassed to be associated with some companies," said Manheim.

By opposing the sale of genetically modified corn to Africa and the use of DDT to fight malaria, NGOs are advancing an "eco-imperialism" that demonstrates a "callous disregard for human

life," said Roger Bate of Africa Fighting Malaria. "NGOs definitely provide benefits in the short run, the in the long run, their influence is almost always malign."

To further combat NGOs and their "global governance agenda" AEI, has launched www.ngowatch.org.

Abstain or Die

Responding to a campaign spearheaded by the Christian Traditional Values Coalition and Rep. Mark Souder (R-Indiana), the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) is threatening to defund the Stop AIDS Project of San Francisco because its programs violate a federal law barring use of federal money to "encourage or promote sexual activity." At issue are safe-sex workshops titled: "In Our Prime: Men for Hire," "Bootylicious," and "Oral Sex = Safe Sex."

You Don't Say

"You know I don't spend a lot of time thinking about myself, about why I do things," said George Bush, as reported in the June 5 *New York Times*. ■



They approached it with caution: "It could be a trap!" ¶ From the Snox came a spark and a static-charged zap. ¶ Then its eerie, blue glow engulfed the dark room ¶ Like light of the sun shining through a thick brume. ¶ The Slaves were quite shaken and taken aback— ¶ How could this box thwart their fevered attack? ¶ From *The Amazing Snox Box* by Brian Gage (Soft Skull Press), a fairy tale for our television age, www.snobox.com.

*What the
Pentagon
doesn't want
us to know
about depleted
uranium*

WEAPON OF MASS DECEPTION

By Frida Berrigan

In the weeks leading up to the war on Iraq, TV screens across America were crowded with images of U.S. soldiers readying for upcoming battles with a crazed dictator who would stop at nothing. One clip after another showed U.S. soldiers racing to don \$211 suits designed to protect them from the chemical and biological attacks they would surely suffer on the road to ousting Saddam Hussein.

But these grim forecasts were wrong. Despite the advance hype, Hussein's dreaded arsenal was not the biggest threat to Americans on the battlefield in Iraq. In fact, it was no threat at all.

The real threat—not only to U.S. troops but to Iraqis as well—may prove to be a weapon scarcely mentioned before, during or after the war: depleted uranium.

A toxic and radioactive substance, depleted uranium (DU)—otherwise known as Uranium 238—was widely used by U.S. troops as their Abrams battle tanks and A-10 Warthogs thundered through Iraq this spring.

Depleted uranium is a byproduct of enriched uranium, the fissile material in nuclear weapons. It is pyrophoric, burning spontaneously on impact. That, along with its extreme density, makes depleted uranium munitions the Pentagon's ideal choice for penetrating an enemy's tank armor or reinforced bunkers.

When a DU shell hits its target, it burns, losing anywhere from 40 to 70 percent of its mass and dispersing a fine dust that can be carried long distances by winds or absorbed directly into the soil and groundwater.

Depleted uranium's radioactive and toxic residue has been linked to birth defects, cancers, the Gulf War Syndrome, and environmental damage.

But the Pentagon insists depleted uranium is both safe and necessary, saying it is a "superior armor [and] a superior munition that we will continue to use." Pentagon officials say that the health and environmental risks of DU use are outweighed by its military advantages. But to retain the right to use and manufacture DU weaponry and armor, the Pentagon has to actively ignore and deny the risks that depleted uranium poses to human health and environment.

To keep depleted uranium at the top of its weapons list, the Pentagon has distorted research that demonstrates how DU dust can work its way into the human body, potentially posing a grave health risk. According to a 1998 report by the Agency for Toxic Substances and Disease Registry, the inhalation of DU particles can lead to symptoms such as fatigue, shortness of breath, lymphatic problems, bronchial complaints, weight loss, and an unsteady gait—symptoms that match those of sick veterans of the Gulf and Balkan wars. Dr. Rosalie Bertell, a Canadian epidemiologist, released a study in 1999 revealing that depleted uranium can stay in the lungs for up to two years. "When the dust is breathed in, it passes through the walls of the lung and into the blood, circulating through the whole body," she wrote. Bertell concluded that exposure to depleted uranium, especially when inhaled, "represents a serious risk of damaged immune systems and fatal cancers."



An Iraqi woman and a child sit in the leukemia ward of the Al Mansoor Hospital in Baghdad, where children with various forms of cancer, attributed to the 1991 use of depleted uranium munitions by the allies, are being treated.

The Pentagon has to cloak this dangerous weapon in deceptive and innocuous language. The adjective “depleted,” with its connotation that the substance is non-threatening or diminished in strength, is misleading. While depleted uranium is not as radioactive and dangerous as U235—a person would not get sick merely from brief DU exposure—depleted uranium has a half-life of 4.5 billion years (as long as the solar system has existed) and may pose serious health risks and environmental contamination.

Don't Believe the Hype: Propaganda Wars

As the U.S. military prepared to launch a new offensive against Iraq early this year, the Pentagon and White House embarked on a parallel effort to promote depleted uranium as a highly effective weapon that would protect the lives of innocent Iraqis. At the same time, the Iraqi government sought to exploit the use of depleted uranium and the serious public health concerns about its use in its propaganda war against the United States.

At a March 14 Pentagon briefing, Col. James Naughton of the U.S. Army announced that U.S. forces had decided to employ DU munitions in the looming war on Iraq. When asked about depleted uranium's possible effects on civilians, Naughton characterized opposition to the use of DU weapons as a product of propaganda and cowardice. “Why do [the Iraqis] want [depleted uranium] to go away?” he asked. “They want it to go away because we kicked the crap out of them [in the first Gulf War].”

The White House echoed Naughton's sentiment, rejecting reports linking depleted uranium to birth defects and cancers in Iraq. Early this year the White House released a report titled *Apparatus of Lies: Saddam's Disinformation and Propaganda 1990-2003*, which includes a section on “The Depleted Uranium Scare.” In it, the White House accuses the Iraqi government of launching a “disinformation campaign” that uses “horrific pictures of children with birth defects” as a tool to “take advantage of an established international network of antinuclear activists.” Iraq's aim, the report charged, was to promote the “false claim that the depleted uranium rounds fired by coalition forces have caused cancers and birth defects in Iraq.”

But few anti-DU activists say that depleted uranium is the sole cause of cancer and birth defects. Rather, they contend there is an obvious link between depleted uranium and other toxins released into the environment during the 1991 Gulf War, that independent study is now required, and, in the meantime, that the United States should declare a moratorium on any future use of depleted uranium.

Depleted Uranium Use Increasing

Over the past 15 years, the Pentagon has become increasingly dependent on DU weapons and armor. The 1991 Gulf War was the first major conflict in which DU weaponry and armor was used. Almost 320 tons—an amount equal to the weight of five Abrams battle tanks—were fired in the Iraqi desert. About 10 tons of DU munitions were used in Kosovo and the former Yugoslavia

in the '90s. DU weaponry was reportedly used in Afghanistan in 2001 as well, but reliable estimates are not yet available.

Depleted uranium was used extensively in this year's war on Iraq, but if Pentagon officials have an accurate accounting of total DU use, they are keeping that number to themselves. In a May 15 article in the *Christian Science Monitor*, reporter Scott Peterson wrote that after the war, the Pentagon, when pressed by reporters, announced that about 75 tons of DU munitions were fired from A-10 Warthogs. However, the Pentagon has stalled on releasing additional relevant data on how much depleted uranium was fired from Abrams battle tanks—the other system that uses only DU munitions. More importantly, it has not addressed concerns that DU weaponry was used much more extensively in Iraq's urban and densely populated areas in the 2003 war than in 1991.

The use of DU weapons in urban areas and against civilian targets in Iraq gives the lie to the Pentagon's insistence that it needed the DU advantage in order to win the recent war quickly. To illustrate the power of this wonder weapon, a March Pentagon press conference prominently featured pictures from the first Gulf War of an Abrams tank firing a DU munition through a sand dune to destroy an Iraqi tank hidden behind. While this makes good TV, did depleted uranium really provide a critical advantage to the U.S. military in Iraq? The answer is no. The U.S. military did not need a wonder weapon in Iraq

A 1998 U.S. Army training manual requires that anyone who comes within 25 meters of DU-contaminated terrain wear respiratory and skin protection.

because the crippled country was not a wonder opponent. Its arsenal was antiquated and had been poorly maintained since the first Gulf War. Suffering under more than 12 years of U.N. economic sanctions, moreover, Iraq had not been able to develop or purchase comparable high-tech armored weaponry.

In his May 15 article, Peterson describes video footage from the last days of the recent war showing an A-10 Warthog strafing the Iraqi Ministry of Planning in downtown Baghdad. This was not an armored target; it was a building in a heavily populated neighborhood. Peterson visited the area and found "dozens of spent radioactive DU rounds, and distinctive aluminum casings with two white bands, that drilled into the tile and concrete rear of the building."

The indiscriminate use of DU munitions in densely populated areas throughout Iraq, which put large numbers of civilians in jeopardy of radioactive and toxic exposure, violates the Geneva Convention's protocol prohibiting the use of weapons that do not distinguish between soldiers and civilians during wartime.

So why did the Pentagon insist on using DU weapons in Iraq? Tungsten alloys would have worked as well. Depleted uranium, it turns out, has one tremendous advantage over tungsten. It is provided to weapons manufacturers nearly free of charge by the U.S. government—an ingenious method of radioactive waste disposal. Essentially, depleted uranium is the waste left over from decades of nuclear weapons development. In fact, the United

States has stockpiles of depleted uranium scattered at sites throughout the country—728,000 metric tons to be exact—a tiny fraction of which is used in the manufacture of depleted uranium warheads.

Lies and Silence

In an April 14 video address, President Bush spoke directly to military personnel and their families, thanking them for their role in the Iraq war. The monuments to Hussein had been toppled in Baghdad, and the first troops were beginning to return home triumphant. The message, broadcast on armed services networks around the country and beamed to troops on the Iraq battlefield, included Bush's promise that veterans of "Operation Iraqi Freedom" would receive "the full support of our government. We will keep our commitment to improving the quality of life for our military families."

The same day, the Defense Department and the Centers for Disease Control released the results of their four-year study on birth defects in the children of Gulf War Veterans. Although the study did not mention depleted uranium specifically, it found "significantly higher prevalences" of heart and kidney birth defects in veterans' children. Unfortunately, the study's disturbing findings were not reported by any U.S. media outlets until June.

The Pentagon and White House propaganda on depleted uranium was never challenged by the mainstream media this past spring. If members of the national press corps had done their homework, they would have found ample evidence that the Pentagon is fully aware of the dangers posed by DU weaponry and is actively ignoring its own research and warnings.

A 1974 military report evaluated the medical and environmental effects of depleted uranium, noting that "in combat situations involving the widespread use of DU munitions, the potential for inhalation, ingestion, or implantation of DU compounds may be locally significant." This

contradicts recent Pentagon claims that depleted uranium does not pose a threat and demonstrates the military's understanding of how depleted uranium is absorbed into the human body, posing risks to organs.

In a 1998 training manual, the U.S. Army acknowledged the hazards of depleted uranium, requiring that anyone who comes within 25 meters of DU-contaminated equipment or terrain wear respiratory and skin protection. The manual cautioned: "Contamination will make food and water unsafe for consumption."

And in November 1999, NATO sent its commanders the following warning: "Inhalation of insoluble depleted uranium dust particles has been associated with long-term health effects, including cancers and birth defects."

They Hid It Well

The fact that these reports are in the public record is the result of years of hard work, study, and Freedom of Information Act (FOIA) requests by anti-DU activists. The Pentagon and Bush administration have also been hard at work. In the past two years, they have clamped down on sources of information that had been immensely valuable to service personnel and their families over the past decade.

Dan Fahey served in the United States Navy just months after the fighting ended in the Gulf War. Seeing the havoc the war

wreaked on his fellow veterans, he set out to become an independent expert on depleted uranium. He sits on the board of Veterans for Common Sense and has played a major role in obtaining U.S. government documents about depleted uranium through FOIA.

Fahey says that, under President Bush, the Department of Defense is controlling the release of information about depleted uranium so tightly that if he were starting his research and disclosure efforts today, he would be unable to get any information through the Freedom of Information Act. "There is less information and more secrecy," he says. "There are tighter restrictions on access to information."

Fahey was responsible for publicizing the findings of a July 1990 report by Science Applications International Corporation (SAIC), a defense contractor commissioned by the Pentagon to study depleted uranium.

The report revealed that the Pentagon knew that depleted uranium was harmful before 1991, when they sent 697,000 American troops to the Gulf, where they could be exposed to DU dust and residue. SAIC asserted that depleted uranium is "a low-level alpha radiation emitter" that could be "linked to cancer when exposures are internal." The report further warned, "DU exposures to soldiers on the battlefield could be significant, with potential radiological and toxicological effects." In addition the report found that "short-term effects of high doses [of depleted uranium] can result in death, while long-term effects of low doses have been implicated in cancer."

SAIC says in its report that widespread knowledge of depleted uranium's harmful properties could lead to public outrage about the "acceptability of the continued use of DU kinetic energy penetrators for military applications." That's what worries the Pentagon.

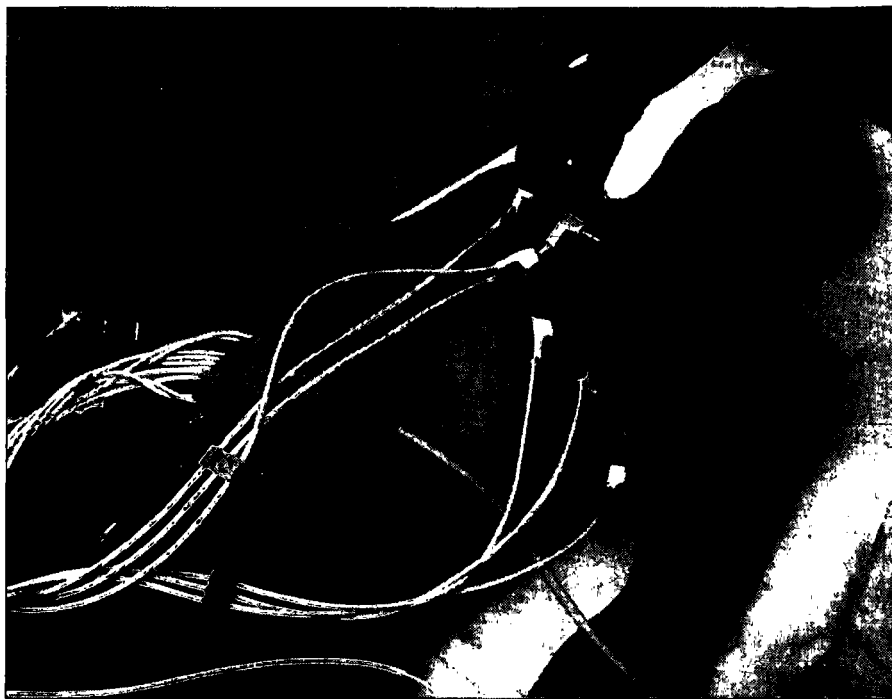
All the while, as the Pentagon hides behind claims that more study is needed to prove depleted uranium's connection with the ailments suffered by Gulf War veterans and Iraqi civilians, their own research demonstrates that, at best, depleted uranium is radioactive and toxic—and that at worst, it can lead to incurable diseases and death.

Veterans Suffer

The Pentagon says more study is needed. But veterans of the Gulf War, meanwhile, need medical care, information, and benefits, and for the Pentagon to come clean about depleted uranium. The veterans had been exposed to a "toxic soup" of smoke from oil and chemical fires, pesticides, vaccinations, depleted uranium and, most likely, plutonium.

Two types of depleted uranium exist. One is "clean" depleted uranium, a byproduct of the processing of uranium ore into uranium-235 (which is used in nuclear fuel and weapons). The other type is created at government facilities as a byproduct of reprocessing spent nuclear fuel (done to extract plutonium for nuclear warheads) and is known as "dirty" depleted uranium because it contains highly toxic plutonium.

In November 2000, U.N. researchers examined 11 sites in Kosovo hit by DU shells and found radioactive contamination at eight of them. Furthermore, those tests uncovered evidence



SEAN GALLUP / NEWSMAKERS

The Czech military is testing all of its soldiers who served in the Balkans for possible signs of Balkan Syndrome, an unexplained condition thought to be caused by depleted uranium used in NATO ammunition.

that at least some of the DU munitions in the U.S. arsenal used in Kosovo contained "dirty" depleted uranium. This raises the question: How much of its plutonium-processing waste did the U.S. government supply to weapons manufacturers?

If some of the DU shells in the U.S. arsenal have been made from dirty depleted uranium, that could help explain why about 300 of 5,000 refugees from a Sarajevo suburb heavily bombed by NATO jets in 1995 had died of cancer by early 2001. And it could also help explain the fact that 28 percent of veterans who served in the first Gulf War have over the past 12 years sought treatment for illness and disease resulting from their military service and filed claims with the Veterans Administration for medical and compensation benefits. In all, 186,000 veterans of that war have sought treatment for a collection of maladies including chronic fatigue, joint and muscle pain, memory loss, reproductive problems, depression, and gastrointestinal disorders. Together these ailments are known as the Gulf War Syndrome.

Based on the struggles of Gulf War veterans, Congress passed a law in 1997 requiring the Pentagon to conduct pre- and post-deployment medical screenings of troops and military personnel so that medical professionals would have an accurate base of information if health problems developed. In the early months of this year, as U.S. troops were being deployed to Iraq, lawmakers found that the Pentagon was not complying with the 1997 law: The troops were not being screened at all.

According to Steven Robinson, a former Army Ranger who now directs the National Gulf War Resource Center, it took two congressional hearings, 30 news interviews, 60 radio interviews, and a timely *New York Times* ad courtesy of www.TomPaine.com to pressure the Pentagon to follow the law. On April 29, the Pentagon announced it would begin conducting postdeployment examinations. Anti-DU activists say the military's grudging compliance is too little, too late.

Activists are struggling for treatment of veterans, for information about depleted uranium and other toxins that could be responsible for the Gulf War Syndrome, and for some sort of government acknowledgement or apology. But they are also battling against a legacy of lies, secrecy, and official promotion of an ends-justifies-the-means posture. Veterans with Gulf War Syndrome can be seen as the latest in a long line of Pentagon guinea pigs that includes the troops ordered to witness the atomic blasts in the early days of the Cold War, soldiers exposed to Agent Orange in Vietnam, and the black men in Tuskegee, Alabama, who were subjected to federal government-sponsored syphilis experiments.

Keeps on Killing

If the Pentagon and the Federal government can treat American troops and their families with such casual disregard and use doublespeak with such abandon, what hope is there for Iraqi civilians and troops?

The people of Iraq have known nothing but decades of war, deprivation, and oppression. It is understandable that many cheered when the statues of dictator Saddam Hussein toppled. At the same time, how could they greet the United States, their liberators, with anything other than the deepest skepticism?

In his just-released book *The New Rulers of the World*, Australian journalist John Pilger recounts conversations with Iraqi doctors like Jawad Al-Ali, a cancer specialist in Basra. Before the Gulf War, Dr. Al-Ali told Pilger, "We had only three or four deaths in a month from cancer. Now it's 30 to 35 patients dying every month, and that's just in my department. That is a 12-fold increase in cancer mortality. Our studies indicate that 40 to 48 percent of the population in this area will get cancer. That's almost half the population."

Not only are Dr. Al-Ali's patients suffering, but his own family members are ill as well. "Most of my own family now have cancer, and we have no history of the disease," he told Pilger. "We strongly suspect depleted uranium."

The public has had to rely on anecdotal evidence like Dr. Al-Ali's testimony to get a sense of the health crisis in Iraq. Throughout the '90s, Hussein's government released data on cancer and birth defects, but it is unlikely that those figures provide an accurate picture.

Kathy Kelly, director of the Chicago-based Voices in the Wilderness and three-time nominee for the Nobel Peace Prize, has visited Iraq repeatedly since the first Gulf War and has built strong relationships with doctors and nurses there. She recounted a day she spent in a pediatric hospital in November 1998. "Four babies were born that day with deformities. I was shocked, but the doctors said, 'This is not unusual.'"

"So, I asked them," she continues, "Did you know where the mothers were when they conceived? Were their fathers involved



A technician of the Institute for Physics in Belgrade holds a 30 mm depleted uranium shell after an experiment to test simulated battlefield toxicity.

in the war? Were they in an area exposed to depleted uranium?"

"One of the doctors replied, 'All of these questions are very important, and we need to be collecting this data, but we cannot. Let me show you something.' And she showed me a prescription for a baby that was written on the back of a candy wrapper. Because of the effects of the economic sanctions, they did not even have paper to write prescriptions on."

There is an overwhelming need for medical research in Iraq, but it is impossible to initiate within the context of the pressing health needs and the lack of medical supplies and equipment that constitute the fallout of war. This situation allows the U.S. military to continue insisting that there is no proof that DU exposures lead to cancers. "No proof of harm is not proof of no harm," Richard Clapp, an epidemiologist at Boston University, told the *San Francisco Chronicle*. "The potential for a DU-cancer link (especially lung cancer in those who breathe depleted uranium

through dust and smoke particles) is still an open question."

Rep. Jim McDermott, a doctor from Washington state, traveled to Iraq in the fall of 2002. He visited hospitals, speaking with his peers, and saw the hospital beds crowded with the dying. He returned to the United States adamantly opposed to a new war in Iraq and deeply committed to challenging the continued use of depleted uranium. McDermott drafted legislation requiring studies of the health and environmental impact of depleted uranium. His bill, introduced just as the war started this past spring, is co-sponsored by a number of other Democrats but needs wider support.

Clearly, this legislation, if passed, would be an important first step in understanding the long-term effects of depleted uranium.

German Chancellor Gerhard Schröder has called for an outright ban on shells made from depleted uranium. That would indeed be another sensible place to start.

In addition, anti-DU activists Dan Fahey, Steve Robinson, and Kathy Kelly should be encouraged and financially supported in their ongoing efforts to compile data and release their findings to the public. Next, manufacturers of DU weapons—like the Minnesota-based Alliant Techsystems, which built 15 million DU shells for the A-10 Warthog—should be held accountable for the long-term effects of their "products."

Finally, we might take up Yugoslavian President Vojislav Kostunica's suggestion: "We should be discussing the depleted conscience of those who used the notorious depleted uranium."

Only then will the cycle of deception and silence about depleted uranium be broken. ■

Frida Berrigan is a senior research associate with the Arms Trade Resource Center, a project of the World Policy Institute.

“This is a revelatory book for these chaotic times.” —STUDS TERKEL

“*The Long Detour* is THE necessary book for progressives who still believe that the good fight can be won.”

—JOHN NICHOLS, *The Nation*

“Learned, politically committed, lucid, and controversial.”

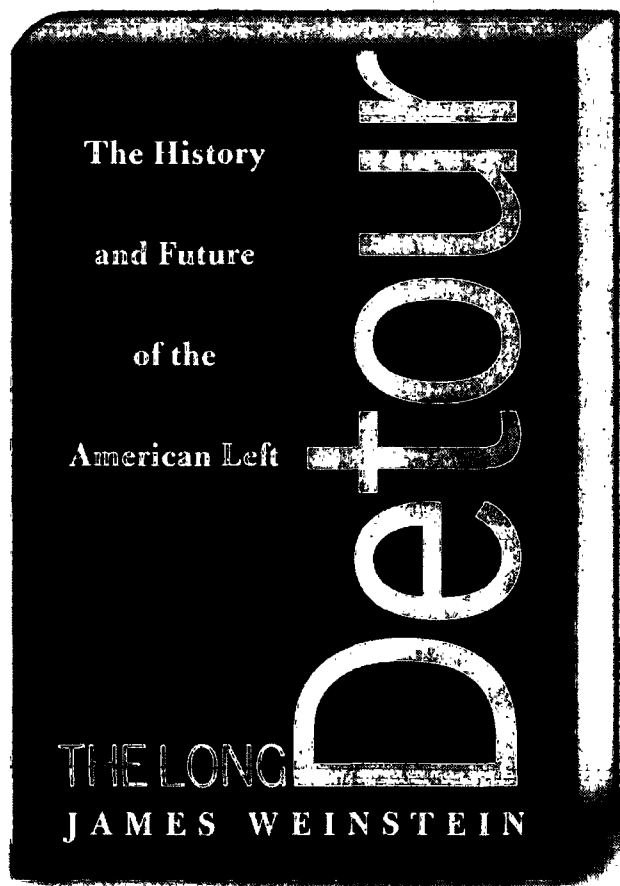
—ERIC FONER

“Lively and provocative, James Weinstein gives us the kind of narrative and analysis that is genuinely useful in our 21st century struggles.”

—NELSON LICHTENSTEIN, author of *State of the Union: A Century of American Labor*

“Now that the Cold War is over and great ideological battles are exhausted, James Weinstein comes along to give us a smart, clear-eyed and readable account of what really happened to American socialism.”

—WILLIAM GREIDER, national affairs correspondent, *The Nation*



Westview Press

A MEMBER OF THE PERSEUS BOOK GROUP

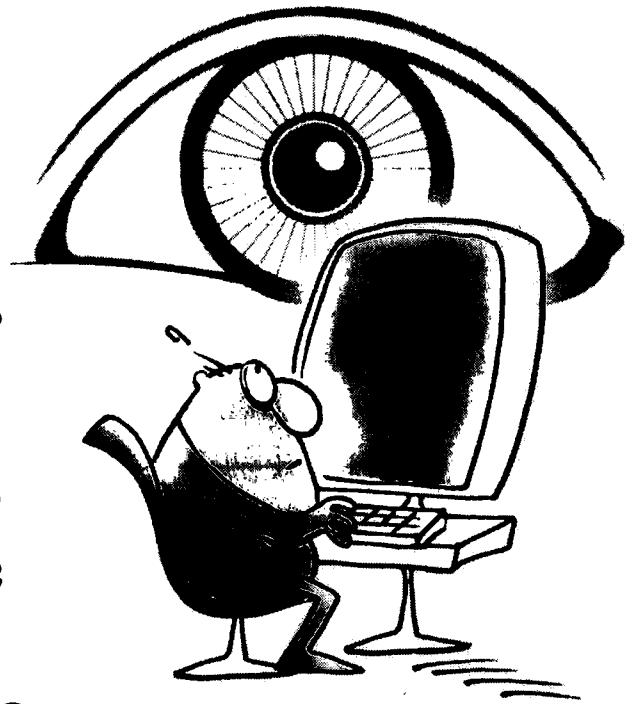
www.thelongdetour.com

0-8133-4104-3, 304 pages, \$26.00, cloth

AT BOOKSTORES NOW, OR CALL 1-800-386-5656

Part three in a special
In These Times series
on civil liberties
and surveillance

A century after
Orwell's birth,
reality overtakes
his classic



Big Liberty is Watching

By Roberto Lovato

Manhattan

Twenty-two-year-old college student Steve Fernandez of Harrisville, Rhode Island, says he came to pay homage to liberty and what the idea stands for. After being patted down in a holding area in front of the ferry that will transport him to Liberty Island, he stands in a long security queue, where he is eyed by police dogs, NYPD officers, park rangers, and helicopters that circle overhead.

These security measures have been in place since the attacks of September 11, 2001. "We have everything here, all the newest technology," says Park Ranger Mark Morse, assuring tourists with what seems like a canned script. "I'm not allowed to say much, but just know that we are very well protected."

"We have to make sacrifices. If that's what it takes, then that's what it takes," says Fernandez, a bass player in a death rock band. When he is informed, however, that—according to interviews with security personnel—"everything" includes dozens of infrared surveillance cameras, vibration sensors, experimental facial recognition monitors, and other now ubiquitous electronic surveillance devices, his brow furrows. Hearing that these technologies are used to digitally capture, transfer, and store the images of tourists like him, Fernandez bursts out: "That's bullshit! What do we have, liberty or Big Brother?"

The bits that make up Steve's confused and angry face may now float in the cyberspace of colossal government databases. In a process known as "datamining," digital technology can rapidly sort through oceans of public and private databases to see if Steve's image and behavior fit any of the profiles and threat scenarios constructed by government officials since 9/11.

The technology is powerful. If Steve uses his credit card to rent a truck and buy fertilizer for his uncle's farm, he fits a scenario. If he checks out a book on the Arabic language at the Jesse M. Smith Memorial Library on Main Street in Harrisville, he fits a scenario. Under Section 215 of the Patriot Act, the FBI can force the library or Amazon.com to hand over Steve's borrowing or purchasing records on demand—without his consent and without notification. If he decides to take scuba lessons during his weekend off, he'll fit other scenarios.

In fact, any commercial transaction Steve engages in may be subject to scrutiny. Most general business records no longer have statutory privacy protections—legal regulations detailing how businesses should handle information about employees and clients. As a result, many companies willingly hand data over to the government.

The world's largest electronic retailer, for one, is glad to help. "There's no need for a court order," Joe Sullivan, eBay's

director of compliance and law enforcement relations told his audience at a February cybercrime conference in Connecticut. "I don't know another Web site that has a privacy policy as flexible as eBay's."

Since the World Trade Center attacks, the Bush administration has invested hundreds of millions of dollars in the hopes of using datamining to identify, track, and capture suspected terrorists. The most controversial of the Bush initiatives are the Total Information Awareness program (now called the Terrorist Information Awareness program), or TIA, and the Computer Assisted Passenger Prescreening System (CAPPS II). Both TIA and CAPPS II are still only prototypes, but privacy advocates are alarmed.

Conceived under the auspices of the Defense Advanced Research Projects Agency (DARPA), TIA is an ambitious and highly secretive project. According to one TIA expert, interviewed on condition of anonymity, "None of us consulted by DARPA really knows if and how TIA is being deployed." The TIA program proposes to process huge amounts of public and private data about U.S. citizens and foreigners: bank transactions, cell phone and computer communications, casino transactions, gun purchases, car and video rentals, and medical transcripts are only some of the datasets the system is purportedly designed to scan and cross-reference.

More targeted, CAPPS II is triggered by the airline reservation system. One of Delta Airlines' lesser-known partnerships was with the Bush administration's practice run of the CAPPS II Traveler Tracker datamining program. As part of the test, the airline ran credit and criminal background checks on passengers at three unidentified airports.

This June marked the 100th anniversary of Orwell's birth, and critics still love to invoke 1984. But the rapid proliferation of such public-private surveillance partnerships is only one facet of our current era that Orwell's classic dystopian novel couldn't predict.

Sir Bernard Crick—preeminent Orwell biographer, political scientist, and author of *The American Science of Politics: Its Origins and Conditions*—agrees that the novel doesn't really reflect the United States post-9/11. "Big Brother describes the kind of atmosphere of a Stalinist or Nazi state, which God knows America is many miles from at the moment," he says. Big Brother and 1984, he adds, "were meant as satire, not prophecy."

"In an open society in which government abuses its power, I think it's a different kind of mechanism in which people are almost bought off by prosperity, by wanting to be left alone in their own private life. The state is just there to protect one from outside interference," Crick says.

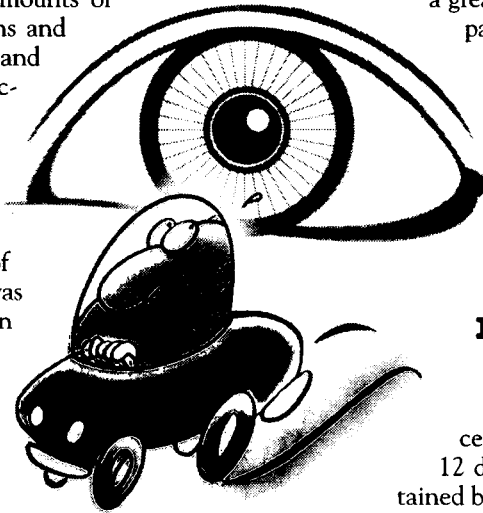
While 1984 may no longer fit the bill, a frightening new surveillance order is coalescing, and activists are groping for metaphors to describe it. Unprecedented technological and legal powers are altering privacy beyond anything recognizable in science fiction or political discourse. In Fernandez's terms, Big Brother and Lady Liberty have digitally morphed into Big Liberty: a hybrid that's not exactly totalitarian, but is certainly not freedom-loving.

"The current administration is getting deeper and deeper into mining public and private databases, with essentially no privacy protections for American citizens," says Peter Swire, who served as chief counselor for privacy at the U.S. Office of Management and Budget under the Clinton administration.

Swire witnessed firsthand the profound shift from privacy-centered to surveillance-centered policy. Between 1999 and 2001, his job was to make sure privacy and civil liberties were a priority in surveillance policy discussions at the FBI, CIA, National Security Agency, and other agencies. His position there has been vacant since he left it.

"We worked hard to make sure that law enforcement and intelligence agencies had the tools they needed to match current challenges," Swire says. "We also tried to make sure that these tools had safeguards."

Datamining technologies combine advanced storage devices, statistical analysis tools, artificial intelligence systems, and other state-of-the-art hardware and software. With these tools, a great many Americans are being electronically patted down without their knowledge or consent. Once a person is singled out for scrutiny, he or she stays marked until proven innocent. More than 4.5 per-



While 1984 may no longer fit the bill, a frightening new surveillance order is coalescing.

cent of the U.S. population is now on one of 12 different "watch lists" developed and maintained by nine federal government agencies, including the Transportation Security Administration, CIA, FBI, and Immigration and Naturalization Services. Disturbingly, under the Patriot Act, such suspects may be tried with secret evidence in a closed Foreign Intelligence Surveillance Act court. "Right now," Swire says, "the criteria guiding Bush administration policy seem to be, one, maximizing the appearance of security and, two, subordinating questions about secrecy and civil liberties to the overwhelming necessity of the war [on terror]."

This cluster of tools forms a "government Google" which takes advantage of the fact that many Americans now live and work among devices embedded with microchips. "We used to think of Big Brother as things like government wiretaps, where government is directly receiving the information," says Swire. "Today, the datafeed doesn't come from a government telescreen like in 1984. The datafeed now comes from your phone calls, your tax records, your bank transactions, your social security number, your grocery purchases, your insurance claims, your credit history, your medical records."

Despite this avalanche of seemingly empirical evidence, critics are troubled by what datamining shares with all "scientific" endeavors: Murphy's Law, or the inevitability of bugs. Commercial users of these technologies have already discovered gaps in reliability, but errors, abuse, and spillover

effects in government datamining programs can have human consequences beyond minor glitches.

A study of datamining effectiveness in catching credit card crooks conducted by the Financial Services Technology Consortium in 1997 sorted through 500,000 samples of credit card transactions. 100,000 were known to be fraudulent. The datamining technology used in the experiment caught 80,000, or four out of five fraudulent transactions—which, according to experts, is pretty good. But it still missed 20,000 fraudulent transactions. Most troublingly, another 80,000 legitimate transactions tested as “false positives.”

In the world of credit, a false positive causes someone to lose money. But false positives in the post-9/11 world could result in imprisonment, according to Robert Ellis Smith, author of *The Law of Privacy Explained*. “None of these huge databases have an accuracy rate that exceeds 85 percent,” says Smith. “And when you’re talking about mistakes in big databases, you’re talking about millions of people who are going to be singled out inaccurately. Not to mention that terrorist suspects will pass through some of the inaccuracies as well.”

What if the error rates of the FSTC study are applied to real world scenarios using real world numbers of people? Suppose that, instead of credit card fraud, datamining projects like CAPPS II or TIA searched for 500 terrorists in a population of 200 million. Using the FSTC study’s findings, the search would find 40 million people labeled as potential terrorists, while 400 terrorists would be caught.

Barbara Simons, a former computer scientist at IBM Research who has taught policy courses at Stanford, says that datamining programs raise as many questions as they are designed to answer. “Computers aren’t especially good at dealing with human behavior; computers deal with numbers and algorithms,” she says. “Given that the description of TIA implies that it will examine information about a great many people, a large number of false positives is an inevitable result.”

In one odd example, the former child star of *The Adventures of Ozzie and Harriet* was singled out for questioning while flying. He was one of several persons named “David Nelson” who were repeatedly put on “no fly” lists by Transportation Security Agency officials in California, Oregon, Alaska and South Dakota. Incidents like these, say privacy advocates, are only the tip of the iceberg.

A less obvious, but no less damaging consequence of such systems is the way that collecting massive amounts of data also increases the probability of abuse. Datamining programs require armies of what are known as “trusted users,” law enforcement officers, customs officials, and others authorized to handle information culled from the projects. Multiple FBI studies show that trusted users are more likely to commit security breaches than an unauthorized user. Meanwhile, the Bush administration has denied numerous requests from the Electronic Privacy Information Center, a prominent civil liberties group, for information about the use and effectiveness of post-9/11 antiterrorist datamining projects, according to the group’s spokesman.

Advocates are trying to defend what’s left of “fair information practices,” protocols established in response to technological developments and government abuses of

privacy in the past. Some of the more common fair information practices adopted around the world since the ’70s include: guarantees that a person can know what information the government has about them and how it is used; mechanisms allowing persons to correct or amend a record of identifiable information about themselves; mechanisms limiting the use of and insuring the reliability of data; the prohibition of secret, personal-data record-keeping systems; and limitations on the amount of time government information is retained. These practices informed the historic privacy laws passed between the early ’70s and the early ’90s, such as the Fair Credit Reporting Act of 1971 and the Privacy Act of 1974.

“We’ve dealt with these problems before,” says former Georgia Congressman and staunch libertarian Bob Barr. “We had them back in the ’50s and ’60s, when government agencies were keeping files on certain people and certain organizations.”

Barr and his fellow conservatives at organizations like the Eagle Forum and the CATO Institute share liberals’ opposition to government invasions of privacy. “The point is not that 1984 is where we are today—we aren’t there,” Barr says, “but rather that there are clear elements of it in the new government powers and capabilities, and that we are headed in a very dangerous direction if we don’t take some steps to bring things more into balance.”

Some say that surveillance technology serves as much to control public opinion as to ferret out terrorists. Edward Tenner—a senior research associate at the National Museum of American History and the author of *When Things Bite Back: Technology and the Revenge of Unintended Consequences*—says that the use of such technology has historically been bolstered by what he calls the “illusion of control.”

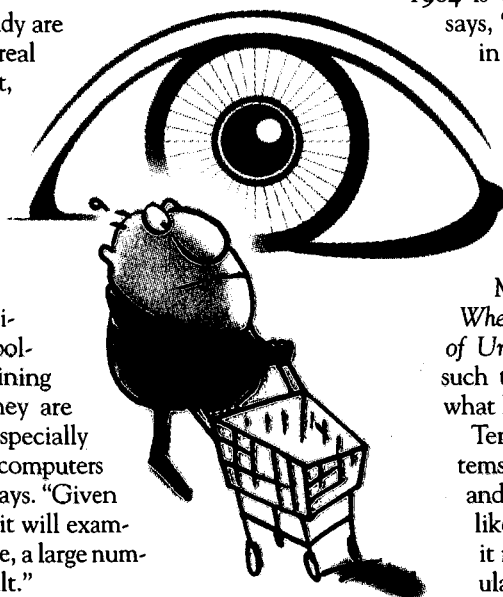
Tenner spent years studying the surveillance systems developed by the Soviet Union and the Nazis and Stasi in Germany. He found a *Wizard of Oz*-like state projecting an illusion of control which it reinforced through ongoing threats to the populace. While these totalitarian regimes were efficient in the use of technologies like the punch card, archival research after their fall indicates

that what passed for security was more like smoke and mirrors. The surveillance operations were surprisingly small, says Tenner, and much information was lost or simply never existed.

“The reputation [of] fear and efficiency had really intimidated the population, and that was all that was needed,” he said. “The concept of datamining is not very popular among actual scientists. They’ll tell you that when somebody’s doing datamining, they don’t really know what they’re looking for, they don’t have a theory. The inherent problem is that it encourages all sorts of spurious theories when you have so much data. These vast accumulations of data are invitations to incredible amounts of mischief.”

With such precedents, what illusions might the superior technology of today spin? History suggests, and Orwell might agree, that citizens should keep an eye on the watchers—and on their own backs. ■

This article was produced under the 2003 George Washington Williams Fellowship for Journalists of Color, a project sponsored by the Independent Press Association. Roberto Lovato is a 2003 George Washington Williams fellow and a writer with Pacific News Service.



Can Radicals Be Liberals, Too?

By G. William Domhoff

Can young radicals—fired by great zeal, but often short on patience—be persuaded to channel their prodigious organizing energies into activities that might build larger constituencies and have a greater long-term impact? Will

Letters to a Young Activist

By Todd Gitlin

Basic Books

174 pages, \$22.50

young activists ever learn from the experience of aging radicals with fabled pasts?

These are questions that '60s activist turned sociologist and media commentator Todd Gitlin implicitly tries to answer in the affirmative. In *Letters to a Young Activist*, he draws on his own experience and reflections in an effort to help young activists do better than his generation did. He sets out to address "big questions about the activist spirit," not to provide a "precise political outlook" or present a list of "positions," except when he "can't resist."

Gitlin affirms the basic need for "agitators" who have "good character" and "the nerve to face reality." It's clear he feels some sort of kinship with latter-day troublemakers in the anti-sweatshop movement, Greenpeace, the Rainforest Action Network, and ACT-UP. He reminds readers of his own time in the trenches, like his anti-nuke sit-ins in Boston in 1960 and his arrest for anti-apartheid picketing outside Chase Manhattan Bank in 1965 ("we didn't get much media and we didn't care"). He recounts the mixture of exhilaration, rage, and fear he experienced during his participation in the violent Stop the Draft disruptions in Oakland in 1967, when his wing of the antiwar movement "seceded from our own people" by blocking streets, trashing stores, and fighting with cops, for which they were "despised" by most local citizens.

Decades later, Gitlin still feels a sense of urgency. But he also has deep regrets about some of the things he and his peers did, and for not saying things he knew he should have said at the time. He accepted the blurring of the distinction between the private and public spheres in the '60s, but now thinks that was a "dangerous idea." He regrets that he did not take voting and the two-party system more seriously, and failed to understand that Richard Nixon would be a real disaster ("we had no idea how bad things could get"). He wishes he had spoken out

to resist the temptation to believe they can create an "earthly paradise," and to avoid "apocalyptic thinking." Act on the basis of duty, love, and adventure, he counsels. Recognize that a movement needs both outsiders and insiders, and that the insiders are usually older (and often former activists). Learn to accept "imperfect allies," and don't be purists. Cultivate an attitude of irony, and don't let justifiable anger turn into rage, which leads to a self-righteous attitude, then becomes a substitute for analysis and a reason for violence that goes against core leftist values. Don't

let frustration lead to a fundamentalism of the left, which isn't any different from other kinds of fundamentalism. Don't tolerate any anti-Semitism, and don't succumb to knee-jerk anti-Americanism. In short, be a leftist who is also a liberal in the best sense of the term.

Most of this works extremely well. It might have worked even better if Gitlin had refrained from delivering various *ex cathedra* opinions—such as his contentions

that Marx was a "brilliant but monomaniacal prophet," that Lenin was "intellectually dishonest," that Chomsky is a "simple-minded" anti-American, and that property-destroying anarchists are "parasites" who have "contempt" for other activists. These kinds of undeveloped arguments, which seem to create categories for "good" and "bad" leftists, do not serve to overcome the divisions Gitlin is trying to transcend. Nor will his passé critique of identity politics, bristling with phrases such as "self-encapsulation," "anti-intellectual mood," and "mocks universalist hopes," gain a hearing for his general argument.

Nor will it do to cast aside "planning" as an economic model simply because it's out of fashion. Gitlin warns young activists



against the direction taken by the Weathermen and the Black Panthers, and he now thinks it was a mistake to be uncritical of China, Cuba, and North Vietnam.

In a searing comparison of the left and right—in which he excoriates the right, reminding activists once again that he hasn't sold out—Gitlin laments the fact that the left is so ambivalent about power, and so fragmented and disputatious, that it cannot bring itself to try to win power. He says his generation was "anarchistic" in temperament. He was elected president of Students for a Democratic Society in 1963, despite his lack of experience, he notes, because four people with more experience would not run for the office.

Warning against such antileadership tendencies, Gitlin calls on young activists

that "the remedy for market fundamentalism is not antimarket fundamentalism"—a "grim road" that we've been down before. There are indeed strong historical, sociological, and economic arguments against nonmarket solutions to economic injustice. And there may be promising ways to use "planning through the market" to work toward a far less exploitative economic system. However, these issues need to be carefully discussed before those who still believe in some form of socialism, whether decentralized or centralized, are going to abandon this longstanding left strategy for creating greater economic equality and social cooperation.

Although it makes great sense to reaffirm the importance of the activist spirit, it may be that today's young activists would feel more respected if key strategic issues were discussed and analyzed in a serious fashion. Regretting that you may have played a role in electing Nixon in 1968, and noting that third parties are impossible in a single-member-district electoral system, is hardly enough to convince Greens that they should form Green Democrat Clubs and take over the Democratic Party through challenges in primaries. It might have been more persuasive to discuss cross-national studies of electoral

What does Gitlin, a veteran of SDS, have to say to today's young activists? As in the '60s, not much in the way of strategy.

rules, and of the great successes of leftists in Democratic Party primaries, along with some description of the great passion and dedication of past third-party activists who were unsuccessful in their efforts.

Gitlin expresses retrospective amazement that SDS "abolished its presidency and vice-presidency" in the mid-'60s, but he does not discuss this decision in the context of the strong preference for "participatory democracy" within the organization and the New Left in general. Participatory democracy is a laudable goal, but in actual practice it may lead to invisible power structures based on charisma if it is not balanced by "representative democracy" as well. Evidence suggests that this is exactly what

happened in SDS from 1963 to 1965, as summarized by Richard J. Ellis in *The Dark Side of the Left* (University of Kansas Press, 1998). But Gitlin is generally silent on the coercive informal power structures that develop even among those of seemingly anarchistic temperament, a problem that popped up again recently in the global justice movement, according to articles in the collection *The Battle of Seattle* (Soft Skull Press, 2001).

Gitlin says that the protesters of his generation used their "anger" most productively when they had good arguments, stayed non-violent, won a hearing from reasonable insiders, and mobilized outside forces to jam the officials and functionaries. In that context, they could "offend a lot of well-meaning bystanders and still get results by making intelligent nuisances of ourselves." This strikes me as a good analysis of why they were effective, but it does not contain a much-needed electoral strategy or a majoritarian orientation. In effect, it is a statement that the left is a small activist elite, mostly young and well educated, which does battle with liberal, centrist, and conservative elites, who are usually older, settled into their routines, and wealthier.

Since this formula is the implicit strategy of most activist organizations even today, maybe that is the best the left can do. But it clashes with egalitarian and participatory values. So perhaps the real need is for a strategy that links social movements to the electoral arena in such a way that success in one leads to more success in the other. That's where a network of Green (or Wellstone or Egalitarian) Democratic Clubs would come into the picture, along with a total commitment to strategic nonviolence in the spirit of the early civil rights movement.

The egalitarian activist spirit that Gitlin celebrates is a dynamic and liberating force, but it can turn into the unproductive rage and despair that characterized the end of his own generation's effort if it is not guided by good strategies based on an accurate analysis of the current social system. These days, it is not the spirit that is lacking. As in the '60s, the strategy is the problem. ■

G. William Domhoff, a sociologist at the University of California, Santa Cruz, is the author of *Changing the Powers that Be: How the Left Can Stop Losing and Win* (Rowman and Littlefield, 2003).

Read why the labor movement is in deep trouble
— and what union members can do to fix it.

Single copies are \$5.00 each
10 or more copies: \$4.00 each
Special rates for 100 or more copies

Write to:
The Labor Educator
75 Henry Street
Brooklyn, N.Y. 11201

Tel: (718) 858-7728
Fax: (718) 488-0072
e-mail: hkelber@igc.org

Web: www.laboreducator.org

10 WAYS
HOW MEMBERS CAN
TO REFORM AN
UNHEALTHY UNION AND
UNDEMOCRATIC
MAKE A VOICE AND
AFL-CIO
A ROLE IN THEIR UNIONS

Error and Liberalism

By James North

Fortunately, this little book is poorly written. If it were more coherent, it might be dangerous. Paul Berman is associated with *Dissent*, but he has little of that distinguished independent left

Terror and Liberalism

By Paul Berman

W.W. Norton

214 pages, \$21

journal's clarity. His work is stylistically clumsy, marred by pretension and intellectual name dropping, disfigured by errors of fact, and further embarrassed by the grandiose use of the first person.

Which is unfortunate, because Berman does have an argument. He contends that the Islamic world is characterized by "mass political movements" that are "drunk on the idea of slaughter." This "Muslim totalitarianism" owes some of its intellectual content to the fascist and Communist European movements of the 20th century. He also suggests that a comparison with Cambodia's genocidal Khmer Rouge is no exaggeration.

Berman's target is Western liberals. These naïve souls have an "excessive faith in rationality," and they wrongly blame the West, its policies and its global culture, for Islamic rage. Berman insists that we must recognize that we are confronting "apocalyptic and death-obsessed mass movements," that we must fight a full-scale "Terror War" against the irrational contemporary equivalents of Hitler and Stalin. He ends with surprising sympathy for George W. Bush, and an implicit endorsement of the U.S. invasion of Iraq.

Berman's choppy and inept writing jumps back and forth with such confusion between the radical Islamists typified by Osama bin Laden and Baath Socialism represented by Saddam Hussein that the reader might not recognize the two have been deadly enemies for decades. But he is right to point out that neither is incomprehensibly medieval or exotic. Baathist

ancestry is clear; the movement emerged in the 1940s, influenced by European fascism, and its more extreme adherents advocate a form of Arab chauvinism that can only be called racist. But even radical Islamism has modern elements. Malise Ruthven's recent *A Fury for God* provides a much clearer intellectual history of the movement, whose leading members are almost never traditional Muslim scholars, but lawyers and engineers, comfortably at home with modern technology.

Berman is also right to raise questions about the West blaming itself. Just after September 11, some Europeans and some

Reagan administration did exemplify the considerable Western financial and military support for the Baathist regime.

But blowback is exaggerated. People in Egypt or Pakistan or Morocco take political action because of what they experience in their own world. A young Egyptian joins the murderous Islamic Group not mainly because he dislikes U.S. foreign policy, but because he struggled for years only to discover his hard-won college diploma is nearly worthless in a saturated job market, he therefore has to postpone marriage indefinitely, he has no chance to vote out the corrupt ruling elite that governs him, and if he protests he may be horribly tortured.

Indeed, torture does seem to be a significant factor pushing some people over the edge, such as Ayman Al-Zawahiri, the No. 2 man in al-Qaeda. Such a young man, enraged beyond reason, may fit Berman's description. But by far the biggest failure in *Terror and Liberalism* is to recognize just how rare this violent fanaticism is. He insists repeatedly that "in large parts of the world, a radical movement of radical Islamists had arisen, devoted to mad hatreds," and that to regard the struggle as a mere police action is dangerously naïve. But he is completely wrong. Twenty months after 9/11, al-Qaeda turns out to be much smaller than originally feared. The attacks on New York and Washington were devastating, but they required only a few hundred thousand dollars and a few dozen conspirators; modern technology magnified their impact horribly. John Ashcroft has not uncovered vast webs of conspiracy inside the United States, despite his disrespect for civil liberties.

In the Middle East, the great mass of people have rejected violent Islamism and the attacks on civilians. Berman says he has "greatly relied" on Gilles Kepel, the French authority on Islamism (who is one of his pitiful handful of sources). But he utterly disregards the conclusion of Kepel's masterwork, *Jihad: The Trail of Political Islam*. Kepel sums up decades of firsthand experience: "In spite of what many commentators contended in its immediate aftermath, the attack on the United States was a desperate symbol of the isolation, fragmentation, and decline



Training the *fedayeen*, "one who sacrifices himself."

Americans rushed immediately to insist the United States had provoked the attacks. This "blowback" analysis does have some merit; the United States and its ally, Saudi Arabia, did originally promote bin Laden and his jihadists against the Soviets in Afghanistan, and Donald Rumsfeld's 1983 visit to Saddam Hussein representing the

of the Islamist movement, not a sign of its strength and irrepressible might."

What is remarkable about the Middle East is the rejection of indiscriminate violence. A key event took place on November 17, 1997, in Egypt, whose 71 million people form the largest Arab state. A small band, apparently attached to the Islamic Group, attacked tourists in the courtyard of the Temple of Hatshepsut at Luxor, killing 62 people. Widespread revulsion among the Egyptian public forced the Group to declare a cease-fire, and tourism has long since revived.

Berman's book draws parallels with Europe in the last century. Now how's this for an analogy: What happened in Egypt is as if Germans, even on the right, were so repelled by Nazi violence in the '20s and early '30s that Hitler and his small band of Nazis had to leave the country, hide out in remote mountains somewhere, and launch terrorist attacks from there. Today, the violent Islamists do remain a serious threat, but we are not engaged in a "terror war" against an entire people.

Meanwhile, moderate Islamism is still a major force. Political observers in Egypt say that the outlawed Muslim Brotherhood, the oldest Islamic organization in the region, would be a significant force in genuine free elections, possibly the largest single party. But the Brotherhood pledged itself to nonviolence back in the '60s, and it has tenaciously stuck to that commitment, even though the Mubarak regime, America's ally, has regularly sentenced its leaders to years in prison, closed its offices, and prohibited its members from meeting. (There was another wave of arrests, including an 80-year-old prayer leader named Mahmoud Shukri, in April.)

Instead of slandering Arabs indiscriminately as fanatics, Berman might have taken a closer look at this remarkable example of courage and restraint. The fall of Saddam Hussein (which took place after Berman finished his book) further undermines his argument. The Iraqi regime was clearly totalitarian, but it did not enjoy the widespread support of masses of people who were "drunk on slaughter," willing to fight to the bitter end.

There is one important exception to the mass repudiation of violence in the Arab world: Israel and Palestine. Suicide bombings against Israeli civilians, although immoral and a violation of

international law, do have popular support, in Palestine and elsewhere. But even here, Berman's analysis is flawed. He assumes Israel is a rational and calm democracy, which is reluctantly and with restraint confronting Palestinians driven insane with hatred. But he totally ignores the violent element in Israeli life, a surprise in a book about extremism. He has nothing much to say about the right-wing religious settlers who are the most aggressive of the 200,000 Israeli colonists in the Occupied Territories that are the biggest obstacle to peace.

A little history would be useful: There were no suicide bombings in Israel during the first Palestinian *intifada*, or uprising, which lasted from 1987 to 1992. Then, in February 1994, a Brooklyn-born Israeli, Dr. Baruch Goldstein, entered a mosque in Hebron, a city in Occupied Palestine, armed with an assault rifle, and slaughtered 29 Palestinians at prayer until the crowd overpowered and killed him. Goldstein had carried out what was clearly in some sense a suicide attack. Palestinian retaliatory suicide bombings started the next month. A year and a half later, another Israeli fanatic, Yigal Amir, murdered Israel's prime minister, Yitzhak

Rabin, just after Rabin had spoken at a peace rally, and other Israeli extremists celebrated Rabin's death. His widow, Leah, said she felt more genuine sympathy from Yasir Arafat than she did from certain leading right-wing politicians in her own country. None of this seems to have stimulated Berman's inquiry into the intellectual roots of violent political behavior.

Instead, he insists that "in Palestine, a mass pathology had broken out," and he excoriates Western liberals who refuse to recognize it. So far, Palestinian suicide bombings, however ugly and illegal, do seem to be still a political tactic that would end once a genuine Palestinian state was established. But if the occupation continues—with the killings, arrests, torture, and illegal demolition of homes—Palestinian violence could spin out of control. But its primary cause would not be the influence of ideas, whether from European fascists or Islamic extremists, but the brutal everyday reality of Israeli colonial occupation. ■

James North has reported from Africa, Latin America, the Middle East and Asia since 1975. He lives in New York City.

Terror and Radicalism

By Pat Aufderheide

It's hard for many veteran leftists to uncurl their lips on hearing the phrase "Weather Underground." A homegrown terrorist movement with pretensions to Third World revolution, it

The Weather Underground
Directed by Sam Green and Bill Siegel

grabbed the headlines with bombings punctuating '70s history and stigmatized the entire range of left activism until its leaders surrendered in disarray.

Even for the Weather-weary, though, the new film *The Weather Underground* by Sam Green and Bill Siegel can't help but hold fascination. Green and Siegel, who were both children in the '70s, have made a feature documentary that goes behind the mask of terror. The result is an illuminating footnote on history, and also a

thought-provoking insight into extremist belief communities.

The Weather Underground is not a wide-angle history film; it doesn't even claim to give you movement history. Instead, it provides a platform for its central characters—members of the underground—to recall and reflect on their own lives. The result is character studies that are both uncomplemented and unvarnished, and an insider's tale of group madness. "When you feel you have right on your side," says one-time Weatherman Brian Flanagan, standing in the bar he now owns, "you can do some horrific things." And some ludicrous ones.

The film is organized chronologically, with flash-forwards to today as middle-aged Weatherfolk—many of them still social activists—retell their memories. The story begins in 1968, with the disillusionment prompted by escalation of the war in Vietnam, assassinations, and splintering of left groups. The impossibly young

activists, still vibrant in the Ektachrome tints of that era's film, glitter with the charisma that Todd Gitlin recalls. He likens them to Bonnie and Clyde, and says, with a shrug: "They were into youth, exuberance, sex, drugs. They wanted action."

It continues with a failed search for the working class; for an end to monogamy through group sex; and an end to the state through bombings. The New York townhouse explosion that killed three Weathermen as they were preparing bombs sends the rest underground and puts a damper on grand terrorist schemes. Until they surrender—lost in America but still outwitting the hapless FBI—they execute publicity-seeking attacks on symbolically rich sites like the Pentagon, State Department, police and state government offices, and ITT and Gulf Oil headquarters.

What propelled them, other than the thrill of attention? They each refer to the revolutionary tenor of the time, and to their revulsion at American empire. "Doing nothing in a period of violence is a form of violence," Naomi Jaffe explains quietly. "The Vietnam War made us all a little crazy," one says, and another seconds it. "None of us thought we were gonna live through it," says Bill Ayers.

No matter what, the filmmakers resolutely avoid commenting on their central characters; they don't contradict, contextualize, celebrate or snicker. And so they build, through the characters revealed in these interviews, a picture of a group whose self-delusion deepened until underground life sealed their isolation. The occasional glimpses of the tumultuous moment—shooting of a Vietnamese in the street, dying U.S. soldiers, presidents pontificating—are gestures to headlines of the times. More importantly, as they exploit the privilege they are so embarrassed by with every media appearance and symbolic act, they testify to the frenetically mediocentric society the Weatherfolk were media stars in.

Bernardine Dohrn was the star of the Weathermen then, and she's the star of this movie. Unrepentant and self-assured, she



Bernardine Dohrn with her son Zayd in San Francisco, 1977.

provides guided tours of once-hot spots, including her first hideout (but doesn't share how she managed to stay underground for a decade). Her husband, Bill Ayers, walks over the ground he once rioted over in Chicago. Like Naomi Jaffe, they are proud of having been part of a worldwide revolutionary movement. But they never explain exactly how they were part of such a movement, other than in their minds. (They do claim more of an alliance with the Black Panthers, but it's more than others would acknowledge.) In this film, as in life, the Weatherfolk speak mostly to each other.

Others live with regret and self-doubt, but in no less of a feedback loop. Mark Rudd, a firebrand student organizer at Columbia University, is now a community college math teacher with a bad conscience. David Gilbert takes solace in not having killed anyone else with their bombs (even though he was part of a holdup in which others died later—an incident the film ignores). The film closes with Brian Flanagan at the site of the New York townhouse ("it never gets any easier") and Rudd saying, "In a way, I still don't know what to do with this knowledge." They may not be much as political analysts, but they are fascinating as survivors of a political cult.

Filmmakers Green and Siegel were both raised in families where politics was dinner-table conversation. Green was attracted as a child to the Weather Underground as part of what he now calls his "false nostalgia" for the '60s. An award-winning filmmaker, Green has focused on dissident, offbeat and criminal characters in other films, such as *The*

Rainbow Man/John 3:16 and *Pie Fight '69*. Siegel (who once interned at *In These Times*) found himself captivated by the puzzle of the "generational cliff" of memory that the Weathermen had tumbled over. "No one younger than me knows who they were," he said at the Sundance Film Festival, where the film was shown before winning the top documentary award at the San Francisco Film Festival. They decided the Weather Underground would make a great subject, and also could provoke some good conversations about politics, violence and responsibility. The two spent two years meeting with principals, winning their trust, before commencing filming. They also spoke to harsh critics, and read histories of the period.

They were finishing the film (which has major funding from the Independent Television Service, the part of public TV that funds work "for underserved audiences") when 9/11 hit. "That changed the editorial focus," said Green. "It made the whole issue more serious. There was a lot less room for humor."

They were finishing the film (which has major funding from the Independent Television Service, the part of public TV that funds work "for underserved audiences") when 9/11 hit. "That changed the editorial focus," said Green. "It made the whole issue more serious. There was a lot less room for humor."

Bernardine Dohrn, who also attended Sundance, misses the humor. "We blew up a statue of a policeman—a statue! It was a joke!" she says. Bill Ayers, at her side but plugged into a cell phone to receive word from his son of an antiwar rally in Washington, nods. "It was poke-you-in-the-eye stuff," he acknowledges. "It was theater," Dohrn says emphatically.

Both praise the film for its "no nostalgia, no axe to grind" approach, but they hate the ending. "It ends with sadness for the loss of three people. But tragedy pulled us back from a very dangerous strategy," says Dohrn. "I look back and say, this was a very restrained movement. We weren't wrong about the U.S. power internationally, about the jailing of black people. We were doing our work in a way where we didn't kill people."

Still, Ayers likes how they were portrayed. "This is a film about people who were in earnest, maybe too earnest, about being engaged. It is a cautionary tale about only listening to yourselves." That's not a mistake Green and Siegel intend to make. ■

Continued from back cover

In the cab back to the hotel while I was trying to figure out what to say to you, the cabbie volunteered, with no prompting—and I have noticed that Chicago cab drivers are much more philosophical than New York cab drivers, which I think has something to do with the superior condition here of the surface of the roads—the cabbie said, and I'm not making this up, "If there's a supernova 60 light years away from here the world will be totally wiped out, we don't stand a chance." I asked him if there was any hope that this might happen before next Wednesday, which is the opera's opening night. He doubted it.

But he gave me something to think about, namely the fact that life, each individual life and our collective life on the planet, is a teleological game. It is not infinite, like Bush's justice; it has an ending, and so the future you put your faith in is not, in fact, limitless; and

given the catastrophic failure here and abroad of the

Kyoto global warming accords,

given our newfound post 9/11 imperialist exuberance,

given the sagging of the world's economy and the IMF-

directed refusal to see any solutions beyond making

poor people suffer even more than they always do in

the hopes of reviving a market that only ever revives

Classifieds

HELP WANTED

ASSISTANT EDITOR. In These Times seeks an assistant editor. Responsibilities include, editing, assigning stories for news section, supervising interns, fact checking, proof reading, and some writing and reporting. Candidates must demonstrate familiarity with the magazine. Salary commensurate with experience, plus 4 weeks vacation and benefits. Minorities and women strongly encouraged to apply. Send cover letter, resume, writing sample and three references to Joel Bleifuss, Assistant Editor Search, In These Times, 2040 N. Milwaukee, Ave, Chicago, IL 60647. Or e-mail search@inthesetimes.com. No phone calls or faxes please.

DIRECTOR: WESTERN NEW YORK Peace Center seeks director for nonprofit peace and justice membership organization. For details, check www.wny-peace.org or call (716) 894-2013.

EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR opportunity California Peace Action and its sister organization the Peace Education Fund are seeking a new Executive Director. California Peace Action is the nation's largest member-based peace organization, with 35,000 members, a staff of 60, and a \$1.9 million budget. Salary competitive.

Equal opportunity employer. Closing date, September 1, 2003. Send letter and resume to DirectorSearch@CaliforniaPeaceAction.org.

EDUCATION

Learn Spanish rapidly, help rural Maya women. Individual Spanish immersion methodology, lodging/meals with Guatemalan family, unique culture/service opportunities, \$140-\$160 weekly—at least 30 percent of tuition supports education for 55 youth/women of remote Guatemalan pueblos. See www.centromaya.org. Write maestros@centromaya.org.

FOR SALE

The Village Poet and Collection of Writings by Leon Newton. www.amazon.com

PERSONALS

Concerned Singles
links compatible singles who care
about peace, social justice, gender
equity, racism, and the environment.
Nationwide. All ages. Straight/Gay. Since 1984.
FREE SAMPLE: 75c. Box 444-JT,
Lenox Dale, MA 01242; ☎ (413) 445-8309;
OR ☐ <http://www.concernedsingles.com>

...I miss the good old days! Bobwhite

long enough to make the rich even richer, given the eagerness in Washington to explore new and tinier kinds of nuclear bombs —well, it's sort of optimistic to believe it's a supernova that's going to get us, when it's clear that what's much more likely to get us, if we are got, is our present condition of living in a world run by miscreants while the people of the world have either no access to power or have access but have forgotten how to get it and why it is important to have it.

And this is what I think you people have gotten your education for. You have presumably made a study of how important it is for the people—

the people and not the oil plutocrats,
the people and not the fantasists in right-wing think tanks,
the people and not the virulent lockstep gasbags of Sunday morning talk shows and editorial pages and all-Nazi all-the-time radio ranting marathons,
the thinking people and not the crazy people,
the rich and multivarious multicultural people and not the pale pale greyish-white cranky grim greedy people,
the secular pluralist people and not the theocrats,
the metaphorical imaginative expansive generous sensual rational people and not the sexual hysterics, the misogynists, Muslim and Christian and Jewish fundamentalists,

the hard-working people and not the people whose only real exertion ever in their whole parasite lives has been the effort it takes to slash a trillion-plus dollars in tax revenue and then stuff it in their already overfull pockets

—whatever your degree, you have presumably read history and thought about justice and freedom and the relationship between ideas and action, and you know how important it is for the sizable community of decent sane just egalitarian people, comprising many minority communities constituting if not a majority then a plurality, a substantial, smart, let's say 40 percent plurality community (more than large enough in a pluralist democracy, which for the time being the United States still is) if it uses its brains and works together,

to wield decisive power, power for enfranchisement and economic as well as racial justice and gender justice and sexual political justice and environmental sanity and in the name of

a real globalism,

a real internationalism,

a real solidarity with all the peoples of the world,

to wield power infused with the knowledge that democracy is created not by military machines, not by MOAB bombs and smart bombs but by smart, peaceable people, fed people, educated people—democracy is created by making an aggressive determined and long-term effort at eradicating the real axis of evil: poverty, homelessness, no health care.

You have read and studied and thought and argued and you all know that it is important for the people to have power, and now you must go out into the world and get it, snatch it back from where it lies, tangled in the bushes, and then use it well, for the community, for the common good. That's the next

bit of bravery we demand from you heroic people. When the supernova comes to get us we don't want to be disappointed in ourselves. We should hope to be able to say proudly to the supernova, that angel of death:

Hello supernova, we have been expecting you, we know all about you because in our schools we teach science and not creationism, and so we have been expecting you, everywhere everyone has been expecting you—except Texas—and we would like to say, supernova, in the moment before we are returned by your protean fire to our previous inchoate state, clouds of incandescent atomic vapor, we'd like to declare that we have tried our best and worked hard to make a good and just and free and peaceful world, a world which is better for our having been here, at least we believe it is.

Years ago I wrote a children's play and in it there's a poem of which I was reminded by the cabbie's information about the supernova. I want to conclude by reciting it for you:

The universe exists because of opposites and tension,
A fact we sometimes overlook, but here deserves a mention.
For every action there's another action to oppose it:
It's common sense, for life is tense, and everybody knows it.
The white hot heart of every star, its radiant extrusion
explodes as atoms, cracking up, cause thermonuclear fusion.
Hydrogen to helium—a force that pushes out:

Ten Billion Years Of Blowing Up is what a star's about.
The star could not exist, it would be blown to smithereens,
With so much inside pushing out lest something intervenes,
And something does, for pulling in is gravity, of course,
Which does the trick of holding in the thermonuclear force.
So one force pushes out, while one is pulling in,
And let's all thank our lucky stars that neither one can win!
For when the tension ceases and the totter doesn't teeter
We'll all be painfully aware we've lost our solar heater.
We will either freeze to death or get blown to Jehovah—
Depending if the sun becomes a Black Hole or a Nova.
And on that day I'm sad to say all life abruptly stops;
but there's five billion years before it shrivels or it pops.
So don't despair; instead reflect upon the stellar state
and on the fundamental fact that stars illuminate.
From grains of sand to giant stars all things share one
condition:

the world we see would never be, except for opposition.

And now I must get back to my cave. Thank you again for showing me the light! Your light! And a million billion mazels to you all. The supernova is coming, but let's not rush things. Go forth and be powerful. Change the world. ■

Playwright **Tony Kushner** is currently working on a production of *Homebody/Kabul* that opens in July at the Steppenwolf theater in Chicago.

CHEAP LAUGHS AT BUSH'S EXPENSE!
SUBSCRIBE TO THE

HUMOR TIMES!

**HILARIOUS
POLITICAL
CARTOONS,
AS WELL AS
HUMOR COLUMNS &
NON-POLITICAL PANELS!**

YES, FOR LESS THAN ONE
NIGHT AT THE MOVIES,
YOU CAN LAUGH ALL YEAR!

GO TO WWW.HUMORTIMES.COM OR SEND A CHECK
OR MONEY ORDER FOR ONLY \$15⁰⁰
(FOR 12 ISSUES) TO:

**Humor Times
P.O.B. 162429
Sacramento,
CA 95816**

ALSO... SAMPLE ISSUES CAN
BE HAD FOR MERELY \$1⁰⁰ !!!

GEORGIE
LOVES IT WHEN
I SHOW HIM THE
PICTURES!



HUMOR
TIMES —
IT'S GOOD
FOR
AMERICA!



"The fierceness with which she loves humanity moves my heart."

—Alice Walker

ARUNDHATI ROY

Arundhati Roy addresses issues of democracy and dissent, racism and empire, and war and peace in this collection of new essays. Fully annotated versions of all Roy's most recent essays—including "Confronting Empire," her January 2003 speech from the World Social Forum in Porto Alegre, Brazil—are included in *War Talk*.

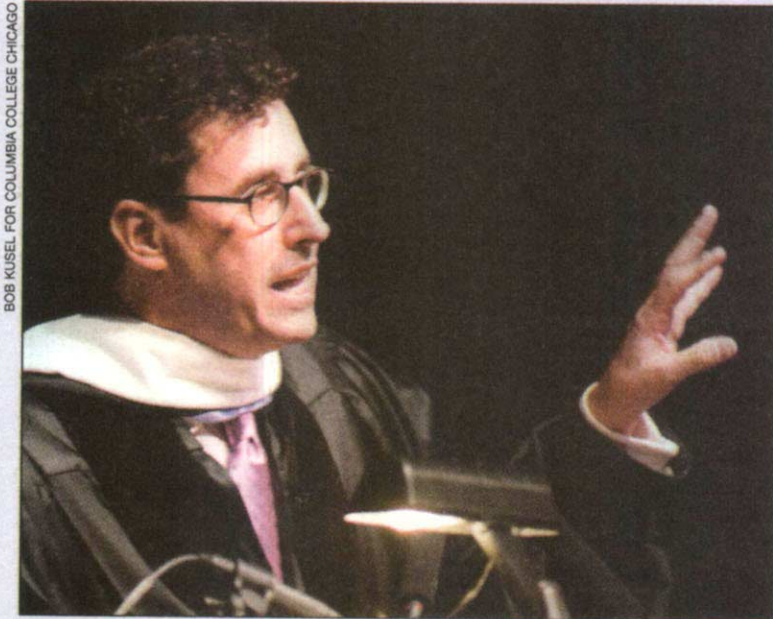
UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA
PRESS

SOUTH
END
PRESS

For individual and organizational orders, please call 1-800-533-8476
website: www.southendpress.org
email: southendpress@southendpress.org

Go Forth and Be Powerful

By Tony Kushner



BOB KUSEL FOR COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO

Tony Kushner delivering the commencement address at Columbia College in Chicago.

On June 1, Tony Kushner gave the following commencement address at Columbia College in Chicago.

Thank you for this beautiful honor, and thank you for freeing me from the dark cave I've been sitting in all week—and by dark cave I mean a theater, I've been in the dark all week watching a director and designers and singers and crew try to put together an opera double bill for which I provided the English-language libretti. Thank you for releasing me for the afternoon from that dark and anxiety-filled cavern of illusion and bidding me welcome to the bright daylight dazzle of your commencement, your impressive achievement: Forget going overseas to fight in Bush's infinite war against terrorism, the really heroic thing in this country is managing against so many odds to get yourself educated. Thank you for letting me share, even though it's unearned, a little of the reflected effulgence of the brilliant sun of your aspirations, your intentions, your ambitions. Thank you for sharing with me your faith in the future.

I was trying to decide what to say to you today. It's never a problem that there isn't much to talk about, but rather that there is so much to say and such a short time. I was told I should speak for 3 to 7 minutes, and all week long I've been pondering the mystical significance of those numbers, 3 and 7, prime numbers, the Holy Trinity and the number of days it took God to make the world. Last night after sitting all day in the dark, in the cab afterwards, heading back to the hotel and my midnight tech-week ritual of eating 11 Hershey bars (11, another prime number!) before passing out in front of more awful, awful nightmare news on CNN—last night it was footage of Dubya and Laura touring Auschwitz, Dubya apparently saying only two things while he was in the concentration camp, "Look at the baby shoes" and, to the tour guide, "Does anyone ever challenge your statistics?"

Continued on page 28